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skin diver

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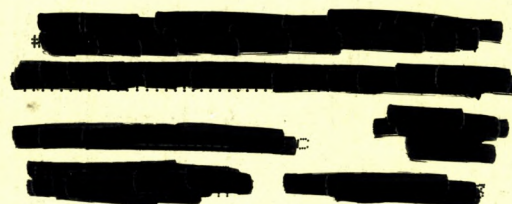
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• Yap • Cayman Brac • Fiji
• Florida Keys • Grand Cayman

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Fishing, Anyone?

BY BILL GLEASON



In today's diving world, it's hard to imagine hundreds of thousands of divers hitting the beaches every weekend, speargun in hand, in search of game fish. Indeed, spearfishing today seems to strike an ecological discord, given our day-to-day commitment to recycling, conservation and an ongoing hope for "managed care" that will actually work for the planet!

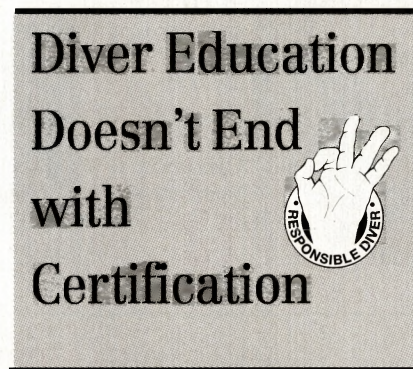
Forty-five years ago, at SKIN DIVER's inception (THE SKIN DIVER was its original title), spearfishing was not only the norm, it was the rage. WW II veterans, clad in primitive dive suits, goggles and flippers, routinely plied their trade every chance they got. A "whopper" then was a very large fish, not a hamburger, and whoppers often made the front page of the local newspaper. It was a time of plenty—running out of fish was something early skin divers didn't think about. It was cool to skin dive and catch big fish. Free diving was the rage. Even the early "lungs" (scuba) were scoffed at, since it was a well known fact that a good free diver could always outshoot anyone wearing a tank.

Like it or not, that was the early history of recreational diving in our country and around the world. Today, spearfishing has virtually disappeared in the Caribbean and other popular dive areas and, with the exception of some local sites, we just don't see much of it anymore. While we'll leave it to the social scientists to explain the change, we shouldn't lose sight of some of the valuable skills these early skin divers possessed.

Besides being good athletes and breath-hold divers, they knew every fish in their local waters, by name, habitat and behavior. In order to successfully hunt fish, you had to know their hiding places and pecking orders. The skin divers may not have realized it but they were some of the first underwater naturalists!

They developed advanced forms of buoyancy control and swimming that allowed them a stealthy approach to fish. It was usually for the purpose of shooting them but it was a skill nonetheless.

Today, many of those abilities have either been replaced with new equipment and technology or simply disappeared. As spearfishing wanes, so do some very important skills. Fish identification, a source of pride to so many U/W hunters, is just beginning to catch on again among today's divers. That's a great trend because it helps us enjoy each dive more thoroughly than the last and can turn even the most mediocre dive into a challenge. Also lost was knowledge of fish behavior. This is now the province of scientists and underwater naturalists



and it shouldn't be. Fish behavior is among the most unusual found anywhere in the natural kingdom, yet most divers know relatively little about it.

A new type of fishing contest may change all that. It won't hurt fish, remove them from the water or damage them in any way. Called the Nikonos Fish I.D. Challenge, it's sponsored by a host of diving companies, led by NIKON and cheerfully joined by SKIN DIVER as a co-sponsor. The way you'll catch fish in this contest is with a camera. You'll win points according to how scarce the fish is, which means you'll have to bone up on your fish identification skills. And, to get the maximum amount of shots, you'll have to learn a little about fish behavior, so you can get them to pose in front of your camera. The combination of fish I.D. and fish photography (which we tried in Bonaire and Cayman this year as a test) turns out to be challenging and a lot of fun as well. First you find the fish, then photograph it, then I.D. it and walk home with some prizes.

Sounds cool, and it is.

The Nikonos Fish I.D. Challenge is a breath of fresh air among diving events. It is easily the most unusual event to come along since the debut (more than a decade ago) of the ever popular photo contest known as the Nikonos Shootout. There is, however, a big difference between the Shootouts and the Fish I.D. Challenge. While the Shootout is primarily a photo contest and judged according to photo excellence, the Challenge merely uses cameras as tools to record your day's "catch" of fish. You don't have to be an experienced photographer—it may even be the first time you've used a camera. It will be a definite plus to know fish I.D. and fish behavior—once you know these skills you'll find taking the picture literally a snap!

The sponsors of the Nikonos Fish I.D. Challenge will provide lectures and mini workshops on all areas of photography, fish I.D. and fish behavior to ensure that even novice divers will get an equal chance to win prizes. And, those members of the family who don't scuba dive will be happy to know that snorkelers will also be eligible to compete in a special snorkelers' category for similar prizes.

The want ad for the Nikonos Fish I.D. Challenge might read, "Any age may apply, no prior experience needed. Should have basic scuba or snorkeling skills. Ability to learn a must. Enjoy travel and new experiences a plus. Open to all applicants seeking an exhilarating challenge." That's the Nikonos Fish I.D. Challenge, in a nutshell.

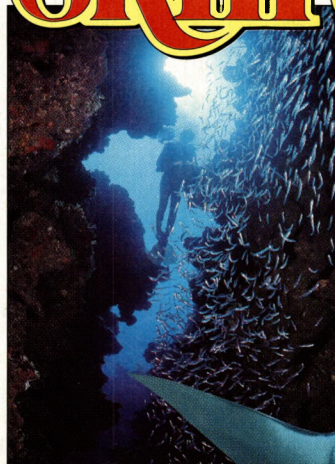
Many thanks to all of the sponsors of the Fish I.D. Challenge for dreaming up this exciting new diving event. For more complete info on the Challenge, see the story on page 7.

A word of thanks to those spearfishing pioneers whose idea we blatantly stole and modified. While it's night and day from the spearfishing tournaments of old, fishing with a camera might just be exciting enough for some of those old salts to join us and test their skills with a camera instead of a speargun.

Hope to see you at Grand Cayman the week of April 12 through 19, 1997. I'll be there and "fishing." 🐟

skin diver

Volume Forty-five • Number Ten



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More fun than you can ever imagine



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The ultimate
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Fish I.D. and basic U/W
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dollars in prizes

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Curacao's finest topside
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ABOUT THE COVER: A Caribbean Reef Shark (*Carcharhinus perezi*) warily regards an underwater photographer during a feeding session conducted by Stuart Cove at Shark Runway off New Providence Island. To learn more about shark diving in The Bahamas, see Stuart Cove's Shark Circus on page 44. Photo/Geri Murphy.

Speak!

Now everyone (well almost everyone) can communicate under water. Introducing Scubaphone Sport—comfortable, affordable and the first and only digital underwater communications system. State-of-the-art DSP, Digital Signal Processing technology, provides the clearest, most intelligible communication possible. The Scubaphone Sport makes it possible to share your underwater experience with your dive buddy, dive group, instructor or even those back on the surface, just as easy as speaking on a cordless phone. Scubaphone Sport brings a whole new level of involvement and safety to every dive. And Scubaphone Sport is built and backed by Orcatron, the true pioneer in wireless underwater communications. Easy-to-afford, easy-to-use and easy-to-maintain, Scubaphone Sport just might be a diver's new best friend. For more information and the name of your local dealer, call 1-888-H2O-FONE, or visit us at our web site: www.orcatron.com.



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T H E 1 9 9 7

**Nikonos FISH I.D.
CHALLENGE**
GRAND CAYMAN
April 12 to 19



Fish I.D. and Basic
Underwater Photography
Combine to Provide
Thousands
of Dollars in Prizes!



Nikonos FISH I.D. CHALLENGE

Parrots Landing, Grand Cayman Island

April 12 to 19

Lectures,
Mini-Workshops,
Photo Tours and
Diving's Newest
and Most Unique
Contest Packs
Thousands of
Dollars in Prizes
into Your Next
Vacation!

**TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY
BY BILL GLEASON**

It's a dive/snorkel vacation packed with all kinds of exciting extras! It's a photo contest but you don't even need to know how to use an U/W camera to win first place. It's a Fish Identification Contest but you don't need to know an angelfish from a butterflyfish before you get there. Divers and snorkelers can participate, so no one in the family has to feel left out. It costs no more than a regular vacation but you can win thousands of dollars in prizes by just going diving and taking some photos. A team of experts is available to help you learn both fish I.D. and photography. There's a schedule that can keep you busy having fun day and night or you can just kick back at the pool if you feel like it. What is diving's newest and most unique vacation/contest?

It's the Nikonos Fish I.D. Challenge and it takes place on Grand Cayman April 12

through 19, 1997. It is brought to you by the sponsors of the world's largest underwater photo contest, the Nikonos Shootout. But there's a big difference. While the Shootout is a photo contest designed for U/W photographers, the Fish I.D. Challenge is designed for all divers and snorkelers regardless of experience. The name of the game in the Fish I.D. Challenge is to find and take a snapshot of as many different species of fish as possible. The photos don't have to be great—the judges just need to be able to identify the fish. Points are scored for each species and totaled daily—prizes are awarded throughout the week. The event ends with an awards ceremony on Friday night, where more prizes are distributed to those participants with the most points, funniest photos and a variety of other categories. All week long, guests are given the opportunity to participate in lectures and informal mini-workshops that provide all the tips and techniques you might need to win the contest.

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE

Both snorkelers and certified divers may participate in the Challenge. All participants must pre-register, stay at the Treasure Island Resort and dive with Parrots Landing, one of Grand Cayman's leading dive operators. There are no age restrictions and participants do not need any prior photographic experience.

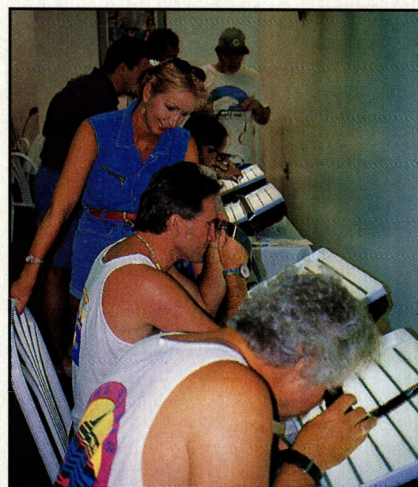
THE COMPETITION

Beginning on Sunday morning, each contestant will receive a free roll of Kodak film. Participants will have from 8:00 am to 1:00 pm to find and photograph fish. Certified divers must use Nikon or Nikonos camera bodies and any type of accessories or housings. Snorkelers may also use Nikonos cameras or any other type of U/W camera. All you have to capture on film is enough of the fish so that the judges (all experts in fish identification) can tell what it is. You will then earn points for each fish you shoot and your score is recorded by the Challenge staff. During the first three days of competition, guests will receive a list of fish they are supposed to "hunt" for each day. Only the fish appearing on that day's list will be eligible to earn contest points.

- Sunday: Dive and camera orientation, plus the ten most common reef fish.



The 290 room Treasure Island Resort is the host hotel for the Nikonos Fish I.D. Challenge and the center of all activities.



Contestants review film and identify fish at Film Selection. Points are awarded for correct identification and scarcity of the fish.



Lectures and mini-workshops provide the necessary skills to be a Challenge winner.

- Monday: Twenty common reef fish
- Tuesday: Twenty different reef fish
- Wednesday: Open
- Thursday: Open

On open days, guests may photograph any type of fish they find and will earn points based on the scarcity of that particular fish. Contestants will receive a free U/W slate in order to keep track of which fish they have already captured on film.

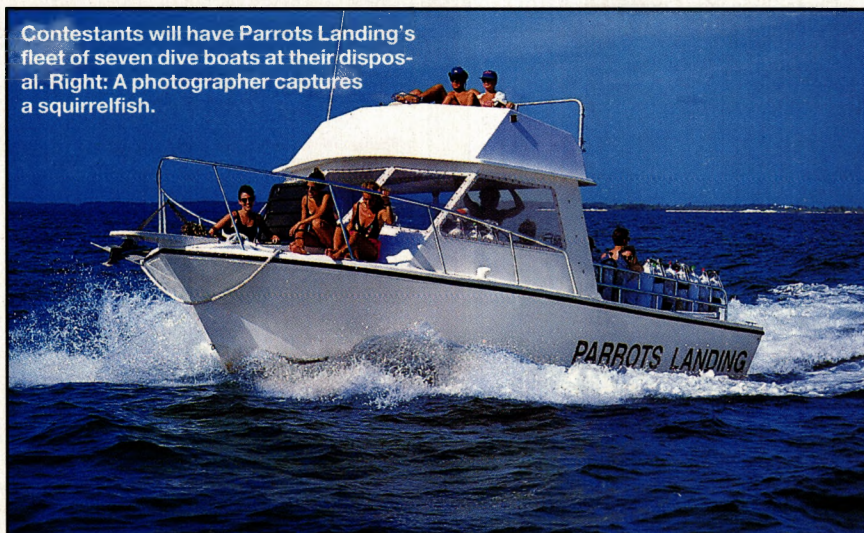
FISH SELECTION

After you have successfully found and photographed the fish, you review your film (usually in the afternoon) and I.D. your fish for that day. You earn one point for correct identification and from one to five bonus points for the scarcity of that particular fish. Nikonos Fish I.D. Challenge staff will check your photo for correct I.D. and award you points. The staff is also on hand to help with photo tips, fish finding tips and to answer any questions you might have. (Note: There is an additional charge of \$10 per roll of film for processing that is not included in

cilities at Treasure Island or on boats for those guests wishing to make an optional afternoon dive. You can learn all about:

- Basic Underwater Photography: For those who have never used a camera or want to review basic functions and techniques.
- Snorkeling Photography: Tips and techniques for snorkelers who are participating in the Nikonos Fish I.D. Challenge.
- Computer Diving: All certified divers will have the opportunity to dive with a computer (even if you don't own one) for the entire week—this workshop will

REEF Fish Identification may be the essential bible for the contest but it's probably best read topside!



Contestants will have Parrots Landing's fleet of seven dive boats at their disposal. Right: A photographer captures a squirrelfish.



photo/Geri Murphy

your basic Nikonos Fish I.D. Challenge travel package.)

LECTURES

In addition to the overall contest briefing and orientation on the first day of the competition, there will be a lecture every evening (Sunday through Wednesday) that will help you identify the fish you will search for the next day. In addition to hints on identifying the fish, you will also learn where these fish usually hang out, get an idea of their daily work schedule and behavior and receive tips on how to photograph them.

MINI-WORKSHOPS

In addition to the lectures and contests, a series of optional mini-workshops will be offered each afternoon. Some will take place in the classroom fa-

ensure you know how to use one.

- Advanced U/W Photography: Advanced photo techniques for experienced shooters, including an introduction to housed camera systems.
- Field Fish I.D.: For guests wishing to learn more about fish. Includes classroom and afternoon Fish I.D. trips.
- Buoyancy Control Workshops: Better buoyancy control lets you get closer to fish, take better photographs, use less air and enjoy every dive more.
- Camera Maintenance Workshops: Tips and techniques for keeping U/W cameras dry at all times and working at peak performance.
- REEF Field Trips: REEF is the leading organization specializing in fish identification and is actively involved in field projects that help determine the health of coral reefs around the world.

THE PORTFOLIO CONTEST

While the majority of prizes will be awarded in the Fish I.D. part of the Nikonos Fish I.D. Challenge, contestants can also win prizes for excellent photography as well! At week's end, guests will be invited to pick five of their best photographs (or most unusual) and enter those as their week long Portfolio. These photos will be judged on photographic excellence and unusual lighting, composition and tone. The Portfolio winner's photograph will be published in a future issue of SKIN DIVER Magazine. All winners in the contest, both Portfolio and

Fish I.D., will have their names published in SKIN DIVER as well.

CONCLUSION

The Nikonos Fish I.D. Challenge promises to be one of the most unique and exciting events ever offered to divers. For the cost of a regular vacation (plus a couple of extra dollars for film processing), guests will enjoy an opportunity to win thousands of dollars in prizes, learn more about fish, improve or learn U/W photography and participate in informative mini-workshops. Throw in meeting lots of other interesting divers and snorkelers and a couple of parties and you have a fun filled event for the entire family. For more information, call WaterHouse Photo Tours at (800) 272-9122, (305) 451-2228 or fax (305) 451-5147.

Nikonos FISH I.D. CHALLENGE GRAND CAYMAN ISLAND

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

DAY	SCHEDULED EVENTS	MINI-WORKSHOPS
Saturday:	Arrival and check-in Ongoing Mini-workshops 7:00 pm Welcome Reception 8:00 pm Fish I.D. Challenge Orientation	Quick Check: Camera/Strobes (15 min.) Computer Diving: Getting Started (15 min.) Basic U/W Photography (30 min.) Basic Snorkel Photography (30 min.)
Sunday:	8:00 am Dive Orientation 8:30-1:00 Ten Most Common Reef Fish Competition Afternoon Mini-workshops 6:00 pm Lecture: Twenty Common Reef Fish	Basic Fish Photography (1 hour) Computer Diving (1 hour) Fish I.D. Basics (1 hour) Advanced U/W Photo Intro (1 hour) Buoyancy Control Intro (30 min.) Snorkel Photography (1 hour)
Monday:	8:30-1:00 Twenty Common Reef Fish Competition Afternoon Mini-workshops 4:00 pm Fish Selection 6:00 pm Lecture: Twenty Different Reef Fish	Balanced Buoyancy Control (boat dive) Basic Fish Photo (boat) Advanced U/W Photo (boat) Camera Maintenance Snorkel Photo Techniques How to I.D. Fish
Tuesday:	9:00-1:00 Twenty Different Reef Fish Competition Afternoon Mini-workshops 4:00 pm Fish Selection 6:00 pm Lecture: Unusual Fish	Introduction to REEF Basic Fish Photography Advanced U/W Photo (boat) Photo Buoyancy Control (boat) Fish Photo Techniques
Wednesday:	8:30-1:00 Open Fish Competition Afternoon Mini-workshops 4:00 pm Fish Selection 6:00 pm Lecture: Rare Fish	Sea Quest BC/gear dive Advanced U/W Photo (boat) Creating Your Portfolio REEF Field Dive (boat) Fish Secrets
Thursday:	8:30-1:00 Open Fish Competition Afternoon Mini-workshops 4:00 pm Fish Selection Evening Guest's Choice	Sea Quest BC/gear dive (boat) REEF Field Dive (boat) Dive with Photo Pros (boat) Judging a Portfolio Advanced U/W Photo (boat)
Friday:	Morning No contests, Normal diving schedule 1:00 - 5:00 Final Fish Selection Portfolio Selection 8:30 pm Awards Ceremony	Dive with Photo Pros (boat)
Saturday:	Check out and travel day	

PRIZES!!!!

- Cayman Vacations
- Nikonos Cameras
- Parrots Landing Dive Packages
- Nikonos Lenses & Strobes
- Sea Quest Computers
- Henderson Divewear
- PADI Videos and CD-Roms
- Aquatica Photo Accessories
- Sea Quest BCs and Dive Gear
- Henderson Lycra Suits
- Southern Nikonos Annual Tune-Ups
- PADI Books/Encyclopedias
- REEF Fish I.D. Books
- REEF Field I.D. Kits
- Daily Super "SurPRIZES"

The Portfolio Contest winner's photographs will be published in a future issue of SKIN DIVER Magazine. All winners will have their names published in the same issue.

LECTURERS

Laddie Aikens: Executive Director, REEF

Frank Fennell: General Manager, Underwater Products, Nikon

Scott Frier: Professional Market Technical Representative, Nikon

Stephen Frink: Professional U/W Photojournalist

Bill Gleason: Publisher and Editor, SKIN DIVER

Bob Warkentin: Southern Nikonos Service Center

Harry Ward: Caribbean Manager, Sea Quest

TRAVEL INFORMATION

\$925

per person/double occupancy

(Single, snorkeler and non-diver rates are also available.)

The package includes eight day/seven night accommodations at Treasure Island Resort; six days of two tank diving from Parrots Landing, plus unlimited shore diving; airport transfers, hotel taxes and gratuities; all entry and registration fees for the Challenge; Kodak contest film; and admit-

tance to all lectures, mini-workshops and parties. Air fare (special contest rates are available) and film processing (\$10 per roll) are not included. All participants must stay at Treasure Island Resort, dive with Parrot's Landing and register and book through WaterHouse Photo Tours.

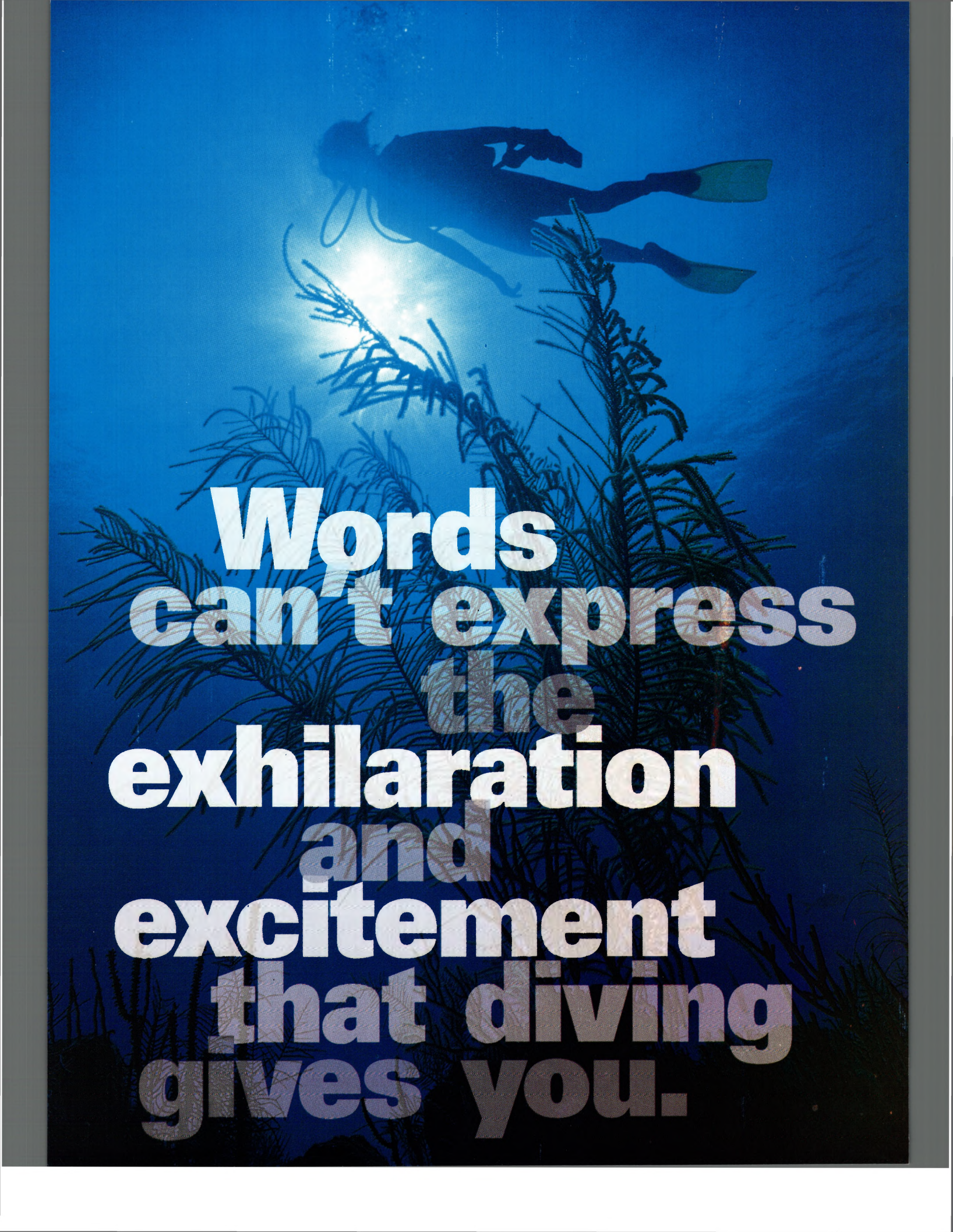
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An underwater photograph featuring a diver in silhouette against a bright light source, likely the sun, creating a lens flare effect. The diver is positioned in the upper half of the frame, swimming horizontally. Below the diver, there are several tall, feathery coral structures that rise vertically. The water is a deep blue color.

**Words
can't express
the
exhilaration
and
excitement
that diving
gives you.**

The Nikonos Underwater Photography System can put the thrill, adventure and fulfillment of diving into perfect focus for you. With the world's most technologically advanced underwater cameras, lenses and accessories, only the ocean itself offers more possibilities.

The Nikonos-V is the ideal underwater camera. It's designed for every underwater photographer, from beginner to seasoned professional. And even first-timers can experience stunning results. Just let Nikonos-V's ultra-reliable automation help you capture beautifully vivid color and crystal clear images.

Start with macro photography, using extension tubes. Then, as your taste for adventure grows, you can take on the challenge of wide-angle photography

with our incredibly sharp 15mm wide-angle lens.

To fully unleash your creative potential, add the Nikonos RS underwater photography system. When you look through the unbelievably bright, remarkably lifelike actionfinder of the Nikonos RS, the world's only underwater SLR camera, an amazing new world of undersea imaging comes alive right before your eyes.

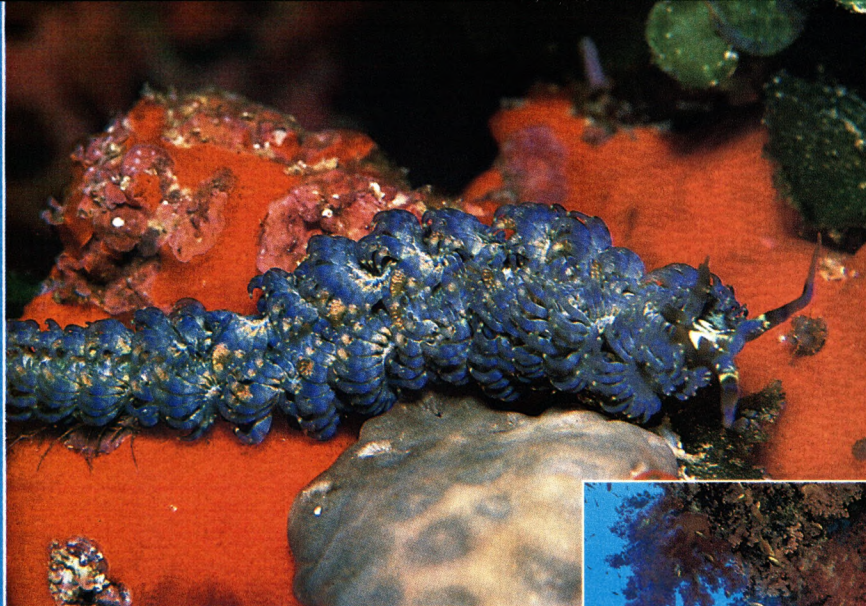
True reflex viewing, the world's most advanced autofocus system, Nikonos' ultra-sophisticated matrix metering and other technological advancements that border on the miraculous, bring you creative possibilities that only a few years ago were an underwater photographer's fantasy.

The Nikonos-V and the Nikonos RS — they put the universe of underwater excitement right in your hands.

Nikon
We take the world's
greatest pictures:
Yours.



Nikonos Can



▶ The intriguing world of macro photography with a Nikonos-V and extension tubes is always exciting. TTL automatic flash operation provides reliable exposures.

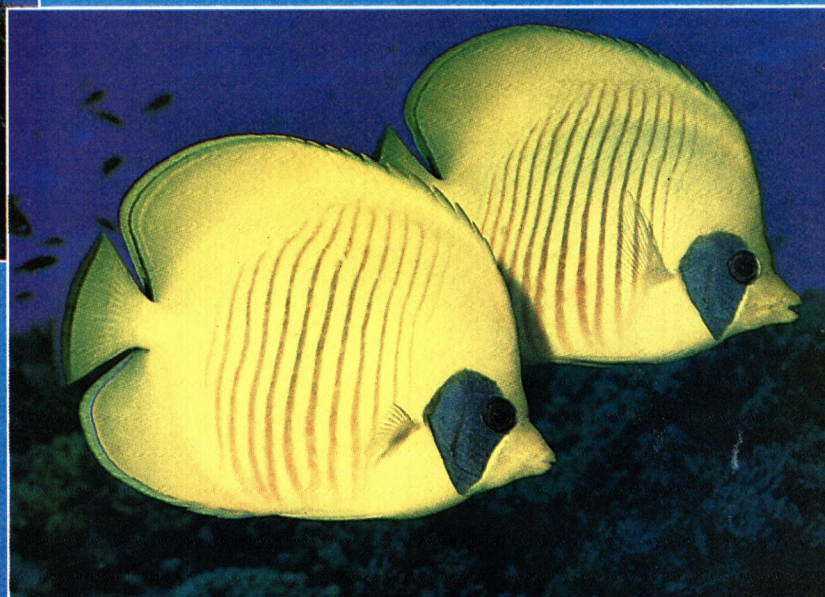
Reef panoramas are easy work for the 13mm Fisheye-Nikkor lens on the RS, with an incredible 170° view of the underwater realm. ▼

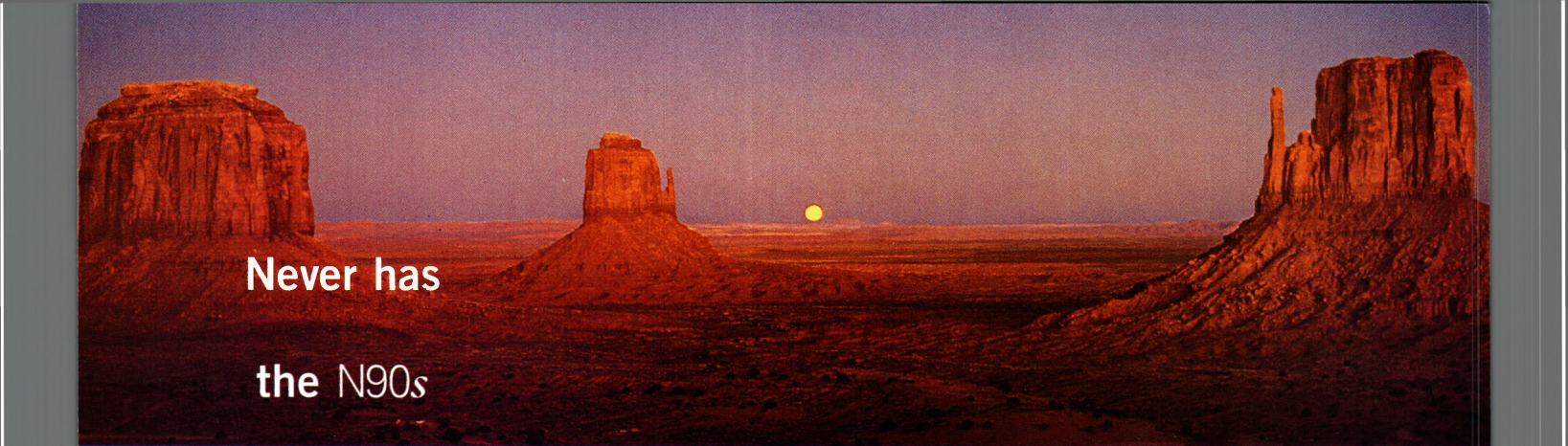


▲ The magnificent wide angle palette of coral colors articulately rendered with a 15mm Nikkor lens on a Nikonos-V. A compact system, designed for fast, easy handling.



The 50mm Micro-Nikkor is the workhorse lens of the Nikonos RS system. Capable of continuous focusing to life-size reproduction, this is the best tool for capturing the elusive beauty of shy marine life. ▶





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Cayman Madness

Bob Soto's Diving and Caribbean Dive Tours are hosting seven consecutive weeks of diving and social events through **October 24** (not including October 4 to 10). This "dive and party" week-long package includes round trip airfare via Cayman Airways or Northwest Airlines, accommodations, daily diving and social activities, featuring the popular underwater treasure hunt, a beach luau and rum punch/steel band party. Additionally, there will be free dive equipment testing and use of Nikonos V cameras and strobes. Hundreds of prizes, totaling \$75,000, will be given away.

For more information, contact Caribbean Dive Tours at (800) 786-3483; fax (404) 565-0129.

Texas Trashfest

The Texas Gulf Coast Council of Diving Clubs will conduct its 21st annual Trashfest on **October 5**. The ecological dive will take place in New Braunfels, Texas, and focus on the Comal River and its banks. There is a \$10 entry fee; an awards presentation, dinner and door prizes will follow the dive and are included in the fee. Registration begins at 8:00 am at Prince Solms Park.

For information, contact Gene or Sara Baugher at 4426 Smooth Oak, Houston, Texas 77053 or call (713) 433-4761.

Tenth Annual Public Safety Diver Forum

The tenth annual public safety diver national forum will be held **October 8 to 11** at the Fraternal Order of Police, Lake Conway Facility, Orlando, Florida. Besides practical training for law enforcement and fire/rescue divers, teams of two divers can compete for prizes. Tuition is \$250 per team and includes the Michigan State Police STAR program, DAN oxygen provider course, introduction to nitrox, personal watercraft basic rescue and more.

For information, contact Detective Ketron Brown at (407) 836-4570, ext. 77240. Packages are also available from Central Florida Emergency Services Institute, 2966 W. Oakridge Road, Orlando, Florida 32809; phone (407) 855-3281.

Focus on Film

The Monterey County Film Commission will host world famous diver/environmentalist Jean-Michel Cousteau and noted U/W cinematographer Chuck Davis for its Focus on Film lecture **October 9** at the Steinbeck Forum in Monterey, California. Jean-Michel Cousteau and Chuck Davis will speak on the challenges and fascina-

tion of U/W filming and use film clips from their personal adventures to illustrate creative methods of capturing U/W visions.

Tickets will be \$15; \$10 for students.

For information or tickets, contact the film commission at (408) 646-0910.

Smithsonian Symposium

The 1996 AAUS Scientific Diving Symposium will be held **October 10 through 13** at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. The focus of this years' symposium will be "Methods and Techniques of Underwater Research."

For information, contact the symposium chair, Michael Lang at (202) 786-2815 or e-mail: asrem010@svm.si.edu.

Texas Divers Flea Market

The Bay Area Divers will present its 21st annual scuba divers flea market **October 12** at 5001 Nasa Road 1, Webster, Texas. The flea market will offer excellent deals on new and used diving equipment and accessories; food and drink will also be available. There is a \$2 admission charge and the market will be open from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm.

For more information, contact Bob O'Steen at (713) 331-0258.

YMCA Scuba Convention

The 37th annual convention of the National YMCA Scuba Program will be held **November 15 to 17** at the Huntsville Marriott and U.S. Space and Rocket Center in Huntsville, Alabama. The convention is open to all divers regardless of affiliation.

For information, contact the National YMCA Scuba Program at 5825-2A Live Oak Parkway, Atlanta, GA 30093-1728 or phone (770) 662-5172.

International Underwater Medicine Symposium

The Federation Francaise d'Etudes et Sports sous-Marins, in association with the World Underwater Federation (CMAS), will hold an international symposium on breath hold diving **December 6 to 7** in Paris, France. The physiology, psychology, limits and techniques of breath hold diving, as related to professional and recreational activities, will be discussed.

For more information, contact Dr. Michel Leloup at 21 rue Voltaire, 93100 Montreuil, France or call 01 48 70 92 93; fax 01 48 70 71 90.

skin diver

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Dixie Divers South East Diving Institute

PADI CDC Prepares Students For a Scuba Career

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY SHIRLEY VANDERBILT

My first job in the dive industry was to hose down the charter boat following each dive trip. After mastering that illustrious skill, I was allowed to load gear, fill the water tank and handle lines. Eventually I moved up to my real goal of guiding dives and driving the boat.

While chatting with the staff at South East Diving Institute (SEDI), a discussion of the labor intensive apprenticeship of the "old days" brought to mind my trials as a divemaster/first mate. It was a time when instructors learned from the bottom up, literally. They swept the floors, emptied the trash and then, day by day, gradually learned the intricacies of airfills, equipment repair and finally dive instruction. Those of us who have been in the business for awhile would likely agree that extensive knowledge acquired in apprenticeship generally results in quality dive professionals who are not only certified but also qualified. It is this qualification that the staff members of SEDI intend for their students.

The technical dive age is upon us, with the advent of enriched air, rebreathers, underwater communication devices, integrated computerized systems and the like. With these innovations comes a tremendous responsibility for instructors to be knowledgeable about not only basic diving skills but also a whole spectrum of dive equipment and dive experiences. To meet this challenge, SEDI is in the process of expanding its professional education curriculum to further enhance its PADI Career Development Center (CDC) standards. Understanding that many of today's dive career candidates do not have the luxury of a long term apprenticeship, SEDI has devised an approach that utilizes a structured educational mode to provide much of the technical knowledge that would be available through extended on the job training. With this approach, students gain the same type of knowledge in a shorter amount of time—certainly a priority in this modern age.

With a move in this direction, SEDI has acquired the expertise of Dave Schubert, a PADI course director who is highly qualified in several areas of technical diving, to oversee its training program.

Future plans are focused on integrating these technical offerings into the institute's curriculum. SEDI is currently offering full training in enriched air (nitrox) diving as well as instructor certification. Additionally, the school offers DAN oxygen training and certification.

SEDI's innovative approach to dive education has roots in the history of Dixie Divers, one of South Florida's biggest success stories. Dixie Divers began as a fledgling shop in Ft. Pierce, Florida nearly 20 years ago. Today it operates as a multi-faceted industry leader with 13 PADI Five Star facilities statewide, an extensive dive travel network, franchise opportunities, community college courses and a professional training institute with two campuses. In creating the training institute, the original intent of Dixie Divers was to provide highly qualified instructors to staff the retail stores and teach classes. That same high standard is what motivates the continuing changes at SEDI to provide quality with each and every certification.

Each SEDI training program (offered 12 times throughout the year) begins with open water certification and ends with resort management. In between you'll find the usual PADI stepping stones to instructor certification: advanced open water, medic first aid/DAN oxygen, rescue, divemaster, and the IDC (Instructor Development Course) and IE (Instructor Evaluation). But that's only the beginning. Your marketability in the dive industry is directly proportional to the skills you have to offer a prospective employer. As the SEDI staff members point out, the training institute actually has three customers: the instructor candidate, the prospective employer and the prospective student of the future. With SEDI's career track program, all three customers are guaranteed sat-



In-water training and instruction takes place at SEDI's Olympic sized pool (above) at the Ft. Pierce campus. Below: The Duane off Key Largo is the ideal training ground for the wreck specialty.



isfaction. First there is the institute's money back guarantee (as approved and reviewed by PADI) for certification through the IDC. Then there's a guarantee accompanying the employment of graduates from the resort management course, including re-training or a cash refund for the employer. With these guarantees in place, the satisfaction of the third customer, the student of the future, is more readily assured.

In an effort to maximize the quality of training, SEDI has also instituted major changes in the Master Scuba Diver Trainer (MSDT) and Resort Management curriculum. Photography and equipment repair training have been removed from the MSDT segment and integrated into the two week resort management program, giving students more extensive time to master these technical skills.

MSDT qualifies the instructor to teach specialties in many areas, some of which include wreck, night and deep diving, naturalist and search and rescue. Prior to the resort management segment, students may also complete courses in medic first aid and DAN oxygen instructor, nitrox diver and instructor, and continuing education counselor.

In addition to the institute's reputation as a leader in quality dive training and its warm family atmosphere, there are many aspects of SEDI that stand out. Two campuses offer students their choice of collegiate environment or tropical resort setting. The main campus, just outside Ft. Pierce, is a five acre paradise nestled among fragrant orange groves and luscious Florida palm trees. The homestyle dorm accommodates up to 16 students free of charge, with a porchfront Olympic sized pool, hottub, lockers and patio for barbecues. Facilities include laundry, kitchen, VCR in the den, a large classroom and a mock retail store and repair shop in the adjacent administrative building. Best of all, the Ft. Pierce campus accesses the beautiful reefs of Palm Beach County, with prolific marine life and clear Gulf Stream currents. Here you're likely to see many migrating pelagic species brought in by the stream and a wealth of year-round residents.

In contrast, Key Largo offers an island style campus within a resort setting. Accommodations range from luxury hotels to campgrounds. And, North America's only living coral reef system in the national park becomes your classroom. The Key Largo retail facility serves as the base of operations for photo and video specialties with an abundance of subjects in the waters offshore. Of course, as a SEDI student in Ft. Pierce, you'll still have plenty of opportunity to dive the Keys during MSDT and resort training. If you prefer, you may arrange a schedule that combines both campuses or just attend your IDC in Key Largo.

As a PADI CDC, the institute offers the opportunity to embark upon training with as little as six months' experience and 60 dives. However, before becoming qualified to actually teach, students will need a full year's experience and 100 dives—all the more reason to come to sunny Florida to spend time with the great marine life and colorful coral reefs. Whatever your choice, Dixie Divers now offers a travel hotline for arranging everything from travel to recreation. This same hotline is available to all Dixie Divers customers. Call (800) DIVE US 1ST. To receive your 1997 training schedule from SEDI, as well as a complete packet of information on courses, prices, accommodations and placement services, call (800) FL-PADI.



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Minelab's Excalibur

Amphibious Metal Detector Finds "Treasure" Fast



Jean-Michel Cousteau searches the sand with the easy to use, powerful and highly selective Excalibur—it can even tune out signals from unwanted items.

BY JIM WALKER
PHOTOGRAPHY BY GERI MURPHY

Whether you search for lost coins at the neighborhood park, lost jewelry in the waters beneath a dock or ancient Spanish treasure from a galleon wreck, you won't have much success without a metal detector. And, for maximum search capability, your best bet is an amphibious model. Minelab's Excalibur could be just what you're looking for. Not only will it allow you to search on dry land, in the surf or underwater to 200 feet, it will also dramatically increase your success rate because you can tune out

signals from unwanted items such as pull tabs.

The Excalibur is a handy, powerful device. It operates on a broad spectrum of frequencies from 1.5 to 25.5 kHz, which allows it, and you, to be very selective about the targets registered. Its microprocessor also eliminates interference from minerals and salt, so the target signals heard in the headphones will be distinct. And these signals (beeps) vary both in intensity and tone, depending on the size and composition of the target. Thus, with a little practice, you'll have a

very good idea of what you've found before you dig for it.

The Excalibur can be set up for topside or underwater detecting by using different extensions to adjust the overall length from 31 to 52 inches. It is lightweight (five pounds in dive configuration, with batteries and headphones) and sturdy. Made of noncorrodible fiberglass, plastic and stainless steel, it also has a unique modular arrangement. Not only do the shaft sections clip together, so do the electronics and battery cylinders. This makes rinsing and cleaning easier and the battery cylinder can quickly be replaced with a backup, if necessary.

The Excalibur comes with one rechargeable battery pack and a charger. (It can also be operated on eight AA alkaline cells.) A full charge (12 to 14 hours) will power the detector for 10 to 15 hours of operation. When batteries run low a very distinct tone will sound every 30 seconds.

The Excalibur operates in two modes, Pin Point or Disc, selected by

(Continued on Page 53)

photo/PPC staff photographer
Lynne Mc Cready

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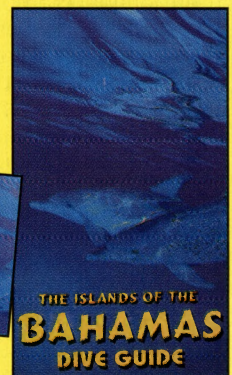
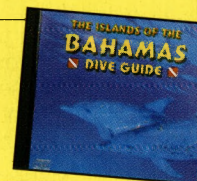
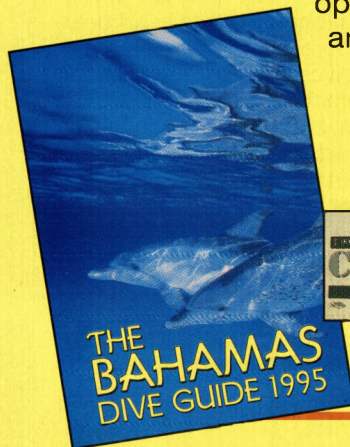
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DISCOVER OUR DIVERSITY

Fish Poisoning

BY FRED BOVE, M.D. PH.D.

Some species of marine life cause illness when eaten by humans. Illnesses related to eating toxic fish are becoming more common in the United States because of increased fish consumption. You don't have to eat a toxic fish in the tropics—the toxic fish can be sent to you wherever you are. Of the many types of poisoning, four stand out because of their seriousness. These are ciguatera, paralytic shellfish poisoning (PSP), scombroid poisoning and tetrodotoxin poisoning.

There are many reports of ciguatera poisoning in tropical latitudes. One small epidemic was described on a live-aboard dive boat, where all the divers became sick from eating fish caught on the reefs. A case of scombroid poisoning was described in a Midwest hospital when a Marlin was purchased by the cafeteria and served to many of the employees. Described below are the characteristics of the most common fish toxicities.

CIGUATERA POISONING

This is caused by many fish commonly found in tropical waters. The toxin is a heat-stable compound that originates from dinoflagellates (a species of plankton). The toxin passes through the food chain and is concentrated in fish such as Red Snapper, Amberjack, Barracuda and Surgeonfish. Ingestion of the affected fish, whether cooked or raw, can produce poisoning.

The victim usually notices symptoms within 12 hours. Often, symptoms will appear within minutes. Presentation may vary from minor tingling in the mouth to coma and death. Tingling sensations, abnormal hot/cold sensations and joint and muscle pains are common. Abdominal cramps, diarrhea, nausea and vomiting are less common. The disease is most severe for 6 to 10 days but many victims complain of symptoms for a year or more. Some victims have a recurrence of symptoms when any fish product is ingested.

There are no diagnostic tests for the victim, although there is a test for the toxin in suspected fish. Because the disease is common in certain areas, it is important to seek advice from natives of the area before eating any fish from local waters.

Treatment of ciguatera poisoning is

primarily supportive. A variety of treatments have been suggested but none has been highly successful. The clinical features of ciguatera are shown in the sidebar.

SYMPTOMS OF CIGUATERA POISONING

- Mouth or face tingling
- Tingling of hands or feet
- Cold to hot reversal
- Paralysis
- Coma
- Abdominal pain
- Diarrhea
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Muscle pain in extremities
- Joint pains

photo/Bonnie J. Cardone

With increased fish consumption, the incidence of fish poisoning is on the rise. Be aware of the symptoms of these illnesses and the origination of the fish you eat.

PARALYTIC SHELLFISH POISONING

This occurs in humans after ingestion of shellfish contaminated by toxins from plankton known as dinoflagellates. These plankton "bloom" in certain temperatures. They often become concentrated enough to color the water. The red and yellow tides that occur periodically throughout the world are owing to a proliferation of these plankton. The high concentration may deplete the sea of oxygen and cause death of fishes but clams or oysters can filter these organisms and concentrate the toxin in their muscles. Contamination may be found in mussels, beach and surf clams, razor clams and butter clams among others.

The illness may take on different manifestations. One form causes nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and abdominal pain. Symptoms usually appear about 12 hours after eating the shellfish. The paralytic type begins with immediate sensations of tingling in the mouth and lips after eating a contaminated shellfish. The sensation spreads to the rest of the body. Numbness may follow the tingling and ultimately, paralysis develops. Dizziness, increased salivation, thirst, difficulty with talking and breathing may occur. In some subjects the symptoms are typical of an allergic reaction, with wheezing and swelling of the throat.

There is no specific treatment. If mouth tingling is noticed, the food should be immediately removed from the mouth.

When food has been swallowed and the victim is sick, vomiting should be induced if medical help is not available. When muscle paralysis is present, careful surveillance of breathing should be done

and breathing assistance provided if necessary.

SCOMBROID POISONING

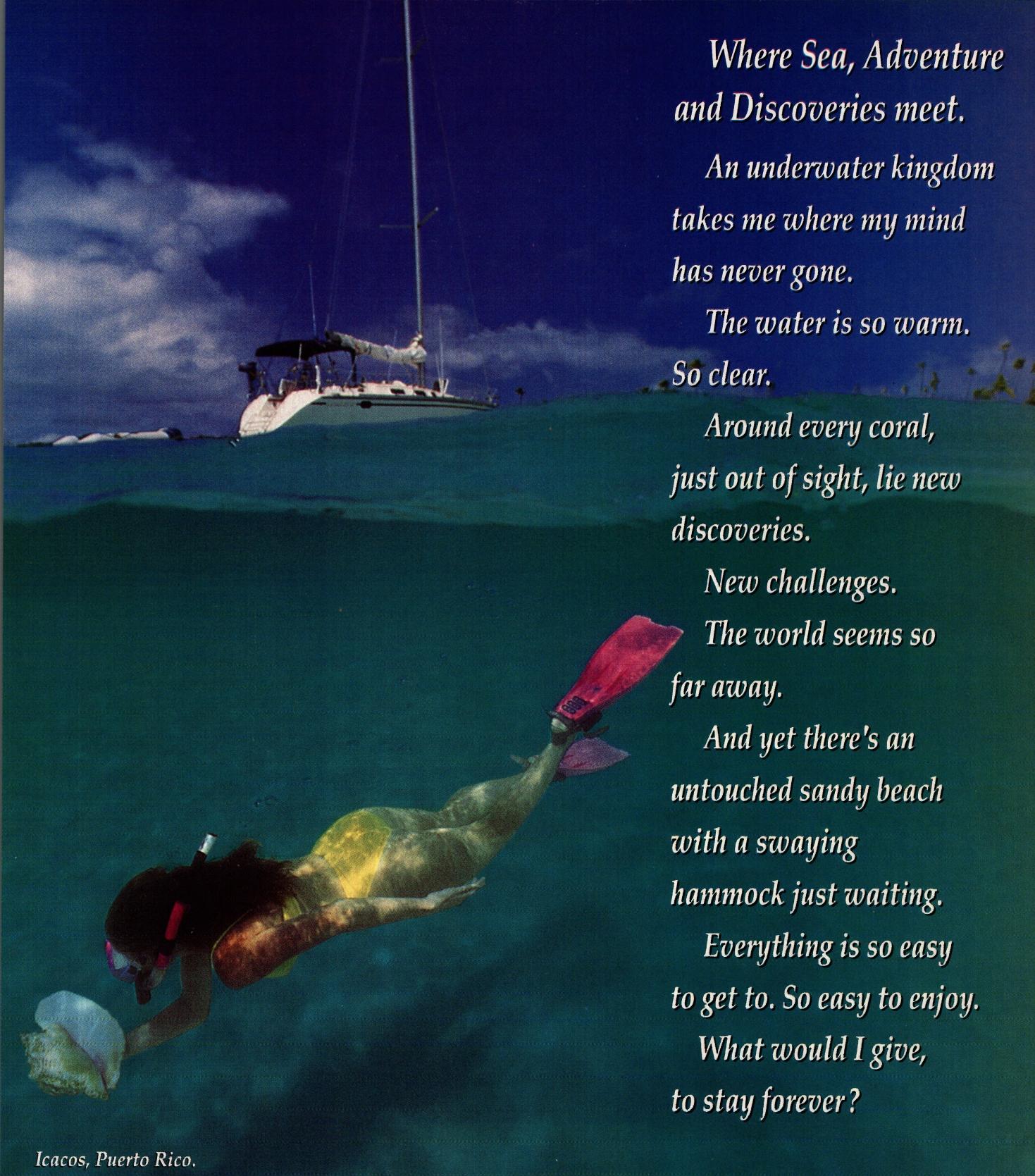
This form of poisoning originates in the scombroid fishes, which include tuna, mackerel, skipjack, bonito and albacore. Epidemics have been related to canned tuna. The disease occurs when the fish, which are usually safe to eat, are left for several hours at room temperature or outside in a warm climate. When at room temperature for several hours, histidine in the muscle tissues is converted to saurine, a drug that causes a spicy or peppery taste. Within 30 to 60 minutes, the subject experiences headache, flushing, dizziness, throbbing of blood vessels, palpitations and rapid heart beat. Blood pressure may drop. In addition, wheezing, hives and shock may occur. Other symptoms include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain and thirst. Treatment includes emptying the stomach, support for shock and breathing support. Antihistamine drugs are considered effective.

TETRODOTOXIN POISONING

This is typified by the well known fugu poisoning in Japan. Fugu poisoning oc-

(Continued on Page 34)



A composite image showing a sailboat on the surface and a diver underwater. The top half shows a white sailboat with a black canopy on a blue sea under a blue sky with white clouds. The bottom half shows a diver in a yellow and black wetsuit, red fins, and a mask, swimming underwater in clear blue water. The diver is holding a white object, possibly a piece of coral or a shell.

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has never gone.*

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So clear.*

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discoveries.*

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The world seems so
far away.*

*And yet there's an
untouched sandy beach
with a swaying
hammock just waiting.*

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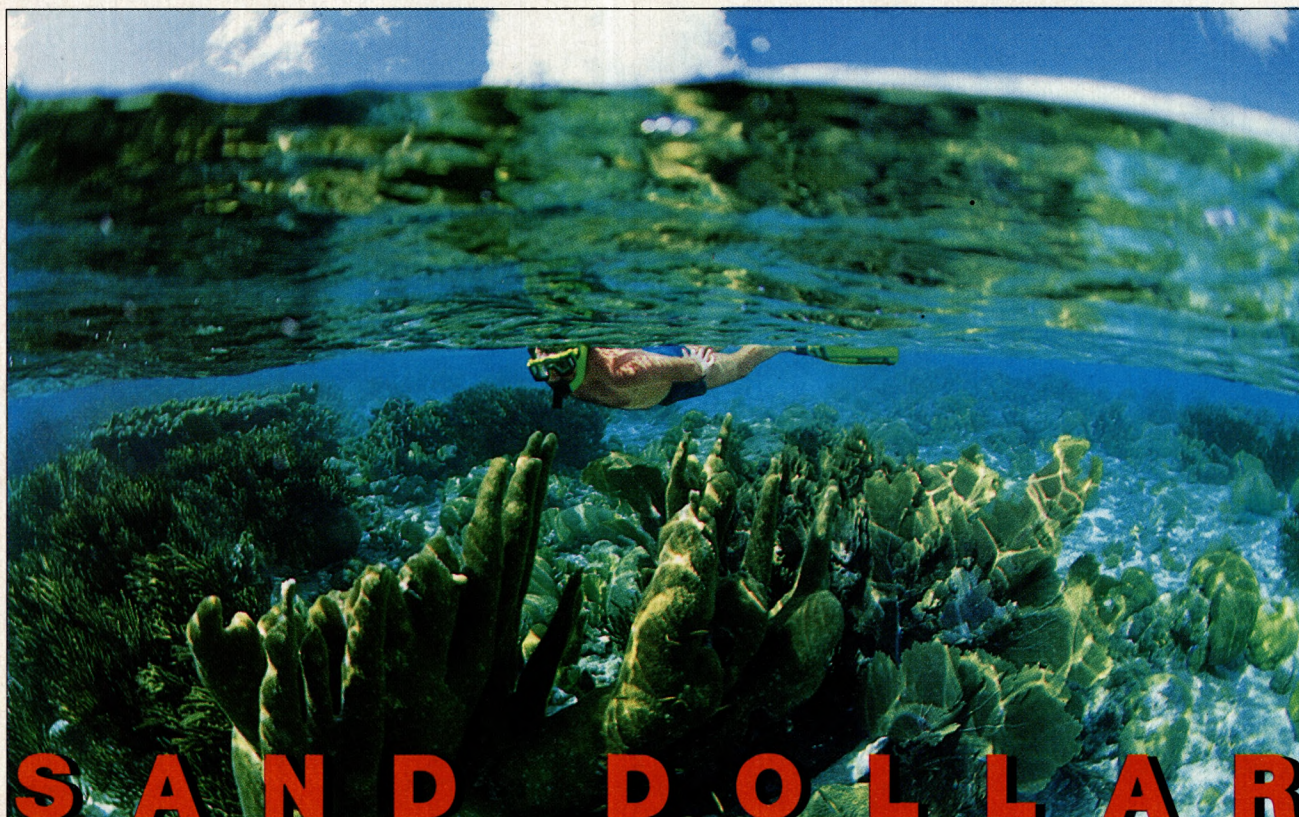
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SAND DOLLAR

DIVE & PHOTO

Bonaire's Watersport Recreation Center

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEPHEN FRINK



Top: Magnificent reef structures are just below the water's surface. Above: A colorful formation at Klein Bonaire's Mi Dushi.

The last time I visited Sand Dollar Dive and Photo was during the 1996 Bonaire Nikonos Shootout in June. It was a busy week for Bonaire and an especially busy time at Sand Dollar, as you would expect of the island's most popular dive center. Owner Andre Nahr and I sat for a while in the oceanfront Green Parrot restaurant reminiscing about how he and wife Gabrielle started Sand Dollar Dive and Photo with one small boat and a few tanks just a decade before. Now they need four boats and a staff of 34 (including 17 instructors) to run the show. Andre looked back on the growth with obvious pride but was quick to point out they remain true to the spirit of the small dive shop they used to be. Even if only one person signs up for a boat dive, that boat still goes out. Amazingly, during Shootout week, with lots of divers opting for beach dives to maximize their in-water time, that happened and I watched a dive boat head out to Klein Bonaire with one diver. No fuss. No trying to move that diver to another boat. Just the high level of service promised being cheerfully delivered. No

wonder people come back year after year and tell their friends about this operation.

RESORT INFRASTRUCTURE

Sand Dollar Dive and Photo operates from the waterfront at Sand Dollar Condominium Resort. This popular resort operates like a fine hotel, complete with daily maid service. It offers 73 individually owned condominiums for rent (including studio, one, two and three bedroom units, each with an ocean view, private terrace, full kitchen with microwave, cable TV and air-conditioned bedrooms). Finished in tasteful white stucco with red barrel tile roofs, Sand Dollar's landscape features mature native shrubs and trees. The resort overlooks the calm, crystalline Caribbean typical of the leeward side of Bonaire and is the perfect holiday residence. There is a grocery store and even an ice cream store on the property. For those who prefer to leave the cooking to someone else, the popular Green Parrot Restaurant is at the water's edge, adjacent to the dive center. Featuring a new and expanded menu for breakfast, lunch and dinner, the Green

Parrot is a local favorite for fine dining and tropical drinks.

DIVE INFRASTRUCTURE

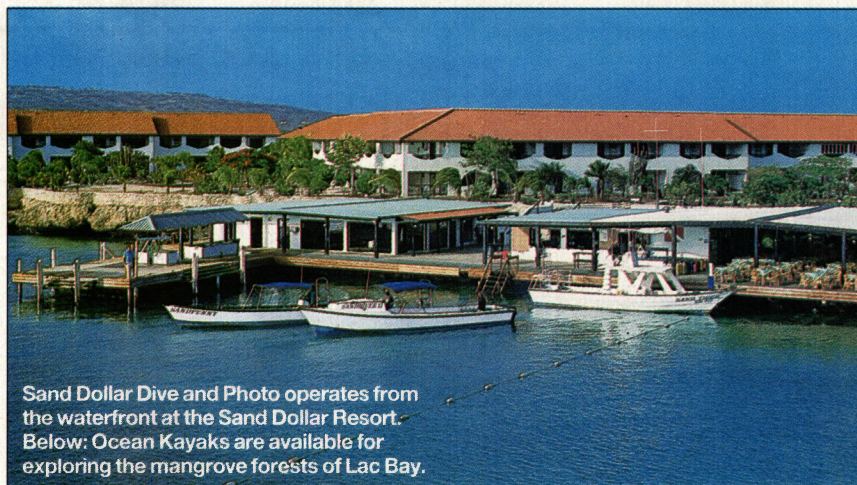
The four boats operated by Sand Dollar Dive and Photo are Venezuelan built V-hulls powered by twin outboards. Rather than buy large boats to handle crowds, Andre decided to cater to smaller groups and offer scheduled departures at 8:45, 10:45, 1:30 and 3:30 (as well as several night boat dives each week). So, even though more than 100 people might be diving out of Sand Dollar on any given day, some will be shore diving and some will be on the boats at different times. A pair of 15 cfm compressors and 16,000 cubic feet of air storage handle filling as many as 600 scuba tanks per day during the peak season. Yet the pace seems relaxed, in control and remarkably stress free. Andre graciously credits his loyal staff of dedicated dive professionals for keeping things running smoothly.

Scuba instruction is a big part of the Sand Dollar formula and it is a PADI Instructor Development Center. Not only can visitors learn the basics of scuba with a resort course, open water certification or an open water completion, they can take it all the way to career preparation as a dive-master or scuba instructor. Plus, students can learn in any of six languages.

With the U/W photo opportunities for which Bonaire is famous, it is no wonder photo/video is an important component. Resident photo pro Jim Brandon, assisted by Julie Morgan, heads a highly service oriented photo center featuring both Nikonos V and Nikonos RS systems for rent, E-6 film processing and newly upgraded video edit machines. Jim is especially savvy with housed cameras. His weekly slide show demonstrates obvious technical sophistication and reverence for the marine life he artistically portrays.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

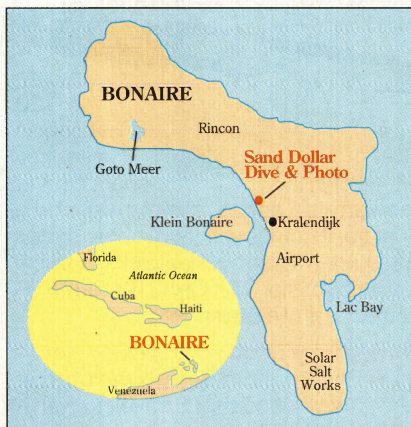
Sand Dollar Dive and Photo has recently expanded into other recreational pursuits well suited to Bonaire and the special interests of its clientele. Kayaking has become very popular owing to the gentle seas and miles of easily accessible and fascinating coastline. Sand Dollar has taken this activity to a new level with rental Scrambler XT Ocean Kayaks (a little larger and more stable than a standard Ocean Kayak and equipped with backrests, water bottles and paddle leash). Programs include ocean touring, guided kayak snorkel trips around the mangrove forests of Lac Bay and even a new two day kayak dive specialty certification. Snorkeling has become a hugely popular activity on Bonaire and the Sand Dollar Guided Snorkeling Program offers special slide shows, reef fish identification programs and even night and mangrove snorkel expeditions. For those who would like to see



Sand Dollar Dive and Photo operates from the waterfront at the Sand Dollar Resort. Below: Ocean Kayaks are available for exploring the mangrove forests of Lac Bay.



photo/David Elliott



Right: With careful observation, divers might find an elusive and delicate sea-horse perched motionless on a gorgonian.



Bonaire from the seat of a mountain bike, Cycle Bonaire offers six distinct trails, "from the granny class to the pedal-smashing masochist league." Bonaire is an island of subtle terrestrial delights and seeing it by mountain bike is but one possibility. Others may prefer the Bird and Nature Adventure, where an air-conditioned van takes the group to Washington-Slagbaai National Park for a guided naturalist tour combined with a refreshing

snorkel along protected coral reefs. While most visitors come to Bonaire for the diving, Sand Dollar Dive and Photo is introducing an enlightened few to the other delights of this unique tropical isle.

For further information about the Sand Dollar Condominium Resort or any of the recreational opportunities presented by Sand Dollar Dive and Photo, call (800) 288-4773 or (407) 774-9292, or directly on Bonaire at (011) 599-7-8738.



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SCUBA ACCESSORIES

SDM Editors Pick Items That Make Diving Safer, Easier and More Fun!

BY TAMARA COLLINS

PHOTOGRAPHY BY BONNIE J. CARDONE

**EDITORS'
PICK OF THE MONTH**

BLUE REEF PUBLICATIONS SCUBA TALK: Illustrated with colorful photos of frequently seen fish in Florida, The Bahamas and Caribbean, *Scuba Talk*, by Keith Ellenbogen, is an all-in-one book, with fish ID hand signals, general information and interesting facts about the featured fish. It also provides space for logbook entries, checklists and personal and buddy information. This 72 page, five by eight inch spiral bound book has laminated covers and pages and retails for \$14.95. Call (617) 332-7965 for a Blue Reef book dealer near you.



TUSA X-PERT FK-840 KNIFE: Solidly engineered for the extreme U/W environment, the FK-840 has a heavy duty plastic, locking sheath that holds the knife secure until released with the button. The 4 1/4 inch blade is



made of 420 stainless steel, has sharp cutting and serrated edges, a line cutter and a blunt tip. It comes with two rubber straps with quick-release buckles and is available in eight colors for \$59. Call (310) 498-3708 for the name of a dealer.

WATERMARK SCUBA SEAFLEX WEIGHT-BELT: Diving with a Seaflex weightbelt takes away discomfort; traveling with it adds convenience—just add weight when you reach your destination! Neoprene is bonded to a custom layer of rubber for comfortable, stretchable pockets that will be snug even at depth. Two pockets hold up to 20 pounds total. Seaflex is available with



a traditional cam style buckle or a new one hand, quick-release buckle for \$39.99. For more information, call (800) 939-5510.

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Designed for all watersports in temperate water, these 2mm neoprene backed gloves have Kevlar palms and fingers for durability, protection and gripping power. A pre-curved palm, gussets around the fingers and touch-fastening wrist closure afford a comfortable fit and excellent dexterity. Available in black in men's XS through XL (women's styles are also available) for \$39.99. For more information, call (360) 435-6696.



SEA QUEST MESH DUFFEL BAG: Big enough to hold all your gear and built to last, this 13 by 30 inch duffel bag is made of durable polyester mesh fabric and strong, one piece, 1 1/2 inch polypropylene straps. The bag closes with a YKK zipper at the top. There is also a zippered pocket on one end of the bag for storing small accessories, a mask, etc. You can fold the entire bag into this pocket for travel or storage convenience. The bag is available in blue or black for \$31 from Sea Quest dealers. Call (619) 438-1101 for more information.

**OCEAN GUIDE MK209
MASK:**



These large, tempered glass split lenses can be your windows to the remarkable underwater world!

The MK209 has low volume to facilitate clearing, an extra soft crystal silicone skirt and nose pocket, swiveling strap buckles and an easily adjustable mask strap for comfort. The MK209's ABS plastic frames are available in six colors for \$49.95. For the address of an Ocean Guide dealer in your area, call (310) 212-3220.

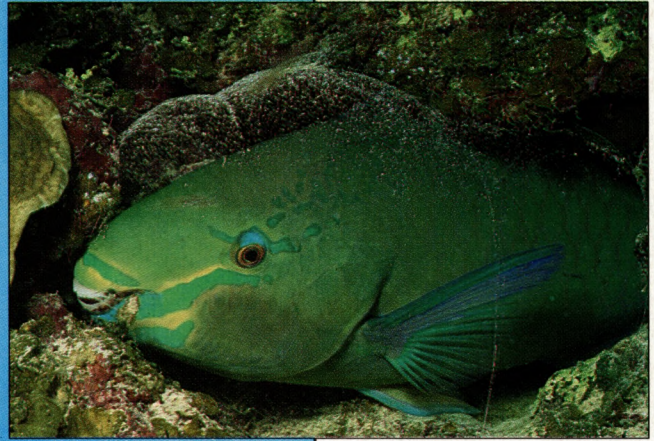
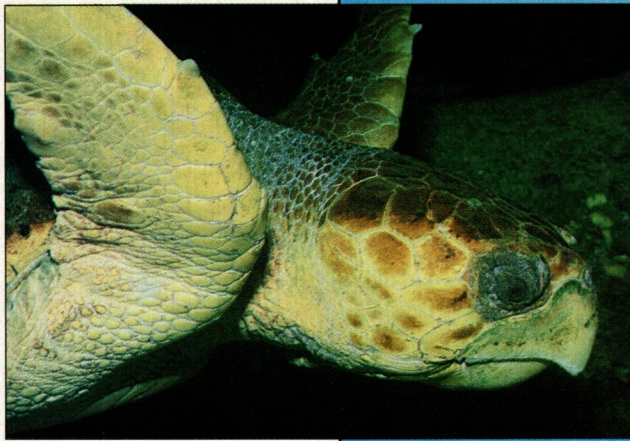
The Florida Keys



A Fishwatcher's Paradise

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY
BY STEPHEN FRINK

A friend stopped by my photo shop the other day to drop off the film from his dive vacation. He is a dive instructor here in Key Largo and, even though he dives locally six days a week, he dreamed of diving the Caribbean. He'd heard of the blue water and seen pictures of gorgeous walls, so he saved his money and finally took his fantasy dive holiday.

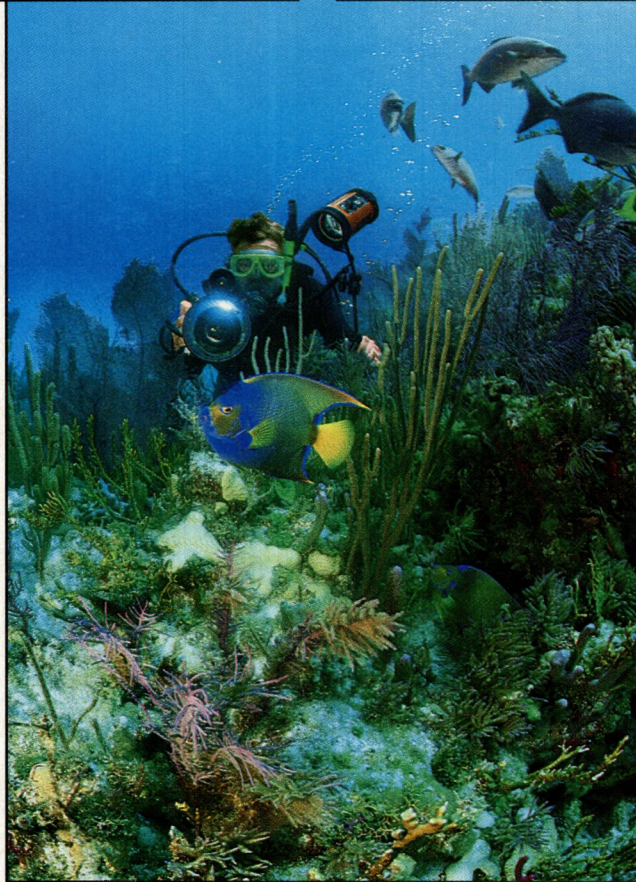


I asked him how it all went, expecting a rave review given his powerful desire to experience something new, different and supposedly better. Instead he replied, "I guess it was OK but I spent too much money and wasted too much of my vacation in an airplane instead of underwater."

"The biggest thing that bothered me, however, was that there were just no fish. The water was clear like it was supposed to be and the sponges were cool but there were no schools of fish. The giant schools of grunts and snappers we take for granted here simply did not exist there and I didn't see a single grouper on the reef."

"I did see one Schoolmaster from a distance but it bolted for dear life with my first glance. Forget getting close enough for an underwater photo. Between fish traps, spearfishing, line fishing and drift nets, those fish don't have a chance. I'm glad to be back home here in the Keys so I can see some fish!"

His observation is one I've made many times, not only in the Caribbean but throughout much of the diving world. Too many countries with limited natural resources have sold their fishing rights to the highest bidder, allowing factory fishing fleets to come in and decimate the fish populations with no regard to maintaining breeding stock. These same countries allow traditional, yet destructive and indiscriminate fishing practices such as traps and gill nets. As the fish become scarcer, smaller and smaller



fish become keepers.

What kept the Florida Keys from falling into the same trap? Fortunately, the United States had the foresight to control its territorial fishing rights. Locally, the Florida Keys has had a long tradition of preservation and reverence for its marine life.

In 1960, the marine life off Key Largo was protected from spearfishing by the creation of the John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park. Pennekamp is under the State of Florida's jurisdiction and, as such, only protects the marine life up to

three miles offshore. The offshore waters along the fringing coral reef, where most of the sport diving happens, was likewise protected in 1975 with the creation of the Key Largo National Marine Sanctuary. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration lends its resources to the protection of 200 square miles of America's Underwater Wonderland. It provides mooring buoys to avoid coral damage owing to misplaced anchors, enforcement for navigational errors involving ship groundings, prohibits spearfishing and

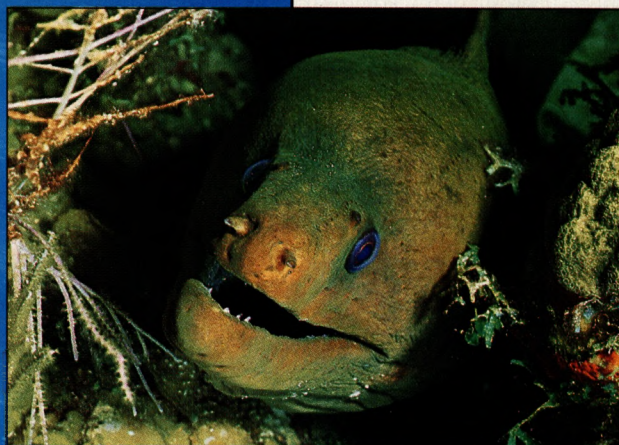
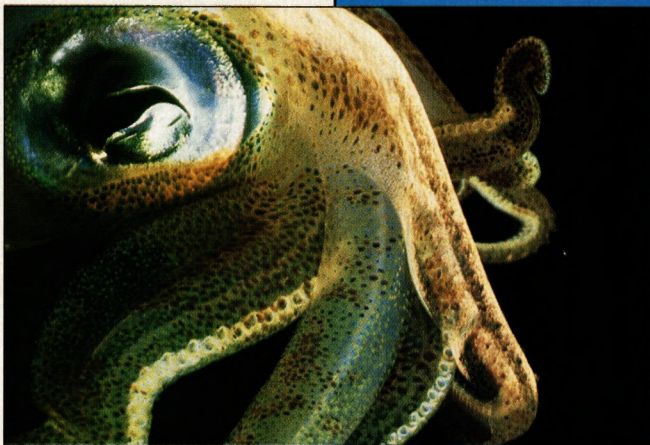
illegal fishing practices and, of course, provides environmental education.

By 1981, the status of the Florida Keys as an ecologically enlightened destination was further enhanced with the creation of the Looe Key National Marine Sanctuary off the Lower Keys. Named for the HMS *Looe*, sunk here in 1744, the Looe Key reef is only 5.3 square miles. Contained within its boundaries are a rich biodiversity and amazing fish populations. Here it is illegal for a diver to take anything—living or dead—from the sea and even lobstering (permitted within the Key Largo Sanctuary) is prohibited for fear that divers may damage coral in their mad pursuit of this succulent crustacean.

As yet another proof of the support for marine conservation in the Florida Keys, all 200 islands are now contained within the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary. Specific zones of use are targeted to enhance the enjoyment of the underwater majesty while sustaining populations of fish.

What does this long history of conservation mean to divers? It means there are fish in prodigious numbers and diversity that don't associate divers with annihilation. This makes the marine life far more tolerant, significantly enhancing underwater photo opportunities. Listed below are some of the things divers are likely to see on the coral reefs and shipwrecks of the Florida Keys:

SCHOOLING FISH: The Bluestriped Grunt is the icon



of the Florida Keys, typically seen schooling in large numbers around stands of Elkhorn Coral. French Grunts are nearly as plentiful and most reefs will feature schools of Smallmouth Grunts as well. Yellowtail Snappers are a favorite of local anglers yet still seem to cruise the reef in astonishing numbers. Other Keys' critters that typically school in vast numbers include Glass Minnows, Goatfish, Gray Snappers, Atlantic Spadefish, Horse-eye Jacks, Copper Sweepers, Bermuda Chubs and Sergeant Majors. Even fish that are normally solitary, such as Barracuda and Blue Tangs, frequently school together on the reefs of the Florida Keys.

REEF RESIDENTS: The beauty and preponderance of reef dwellers has made this the world's favorite dive destination. All manner of Caribbean angelfish and butterflyfish either breed here or are transported to these reefs by the warm, crystalline Gulf Stream. Groupers are common and even the Jewfish population is beginning to reemerge. Virtually every species of parrotfish found in the Western Hemisphere is here, both grazing the reef during the day and sleeping in their mucous cocoons at night. Wrasse, Spotted Drums, stingrays, hawkfish, pufferfish, Trumpetfish and triggerfish can likely be spotted on any given dive. More vigilant fishwatchers will be rewarded with Snook, Tarpon, Permit, flounder, jawfish and lizardfish.

PREDATORS: The Florida Keys have plenty of sharks



but a diver is unlikely to see them on most dives. I have encountered Tiger Sharks, Great Hammerheads, Bull Sharks and, of course, scores

of Nurse Sharks, but each was a rare and special experience. There are even Great White Sharks occasionally caught by sportfishing char-

ters along the deepwater pinacles off Islamorada. Far more common are Barracuda and eels. Divemasters in some areas of the Keys have handfed these supposedly fierce predators and made them far easier to approach than is typical in the wild.

PELAGIC SPECIES: While most of the diving is done along the spur and groove coral formations that comprise the fringing reef, those who keep their eyes to the blue water farther offshore will occasionally be rewarded with sightings of Eagle Rays, turtles and, on rare instances, Whale Sharks.

THE RARE AND UNUSUAL: Keys' waters also provide preferred habitat for some unusual marine creatures. I have photographed a Mola-Mola (Ocean Sunfish) here and encountered a Blanket Octopus (*Tremoctopus violaceus*), a species never before photographed in the wild, at Molasses Reef, one of the world's most frequently dived sites. An alert eye and ample time in the water are the only requirements to delight a fishwatcher, no matter where he/she chooses to dive in the fabulous Florida Keys.

The Florida Keys are easily accessible via **AMERICAN AIRLINES**, *Something Special to the Florida Keys*, to Miami with connecting flights on **AMERICAN EAGLE** to Key West or Marathon. For reservations, just call (800) 433-7300. For more information on The Florida Keys and Key West, visit our Web Site at [HTTP://WWW.FLA-KEYS.COM](http://www.FLA-KEYS.COM) or call (800) FLA-KEYS.



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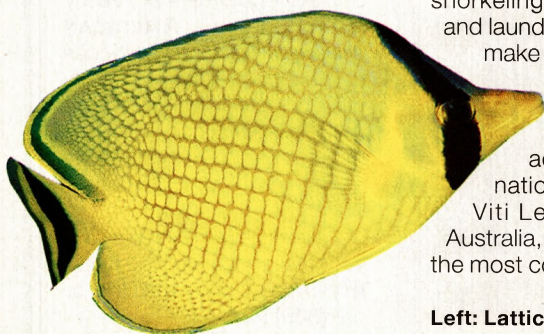
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Fiji Forbes Laucala

The Ultimate Island Dive Retreat

**TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY
BY JACK AND
SUE DRAFAHL**

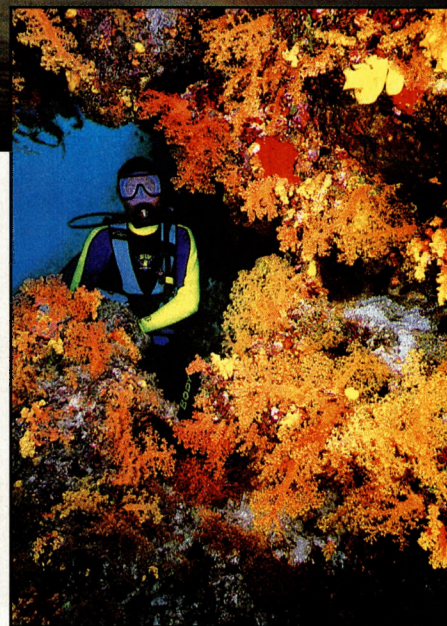


Let's face it. Most people today have lives that can get pretty stressful. When you finally have a chance to break away from it all, you want a dream dive vacation that truly lets you unwind. We've found a special place that offers world-class diving, first class treatment and an island atmosphere that registers a zero on the stress meter! The first time you visit Laucala (La-THAH-La), Fiji, you may even have to pinch yourself just to make sure you're not dreaming!

Laucala is a small, 3,000 acre island that was originally the getaway for publisher Malcolm Forbes. It has since become one of the most prestigious resorts in the world. Still owned and operated by Forbes Magazine, the resort is all inclusive: food, drink, deep sea fishing, diving, snorkeling, sailing, hiking, tennis, waterskiing and laundry services. Everything is designed to make your stay as comfortable as possible.

Before we tell you more about the resort, let's get you there. This island retreat is remote but easy to access. You fly first to Nadi, the international hub of Fiji, on the main island of Viti Levu. Nadi can be accessed from Australia, New Zealand, Hawaii and Japan but the most common approach is a direct 10 hour

Left: Latticed Butterflyfish (*Chaetodon rafflesi*)



Top: The color streaked sky above Laucala is reflected in the calm Koro Sea, which caresses the palm strewn 3,000 acre island. Above: Soft corals flourish in Fiji's nutrient rich currents. Below: A fleet of five dive boats is at the disposal of Laucala's guests.





Above: *Cassiopea* sp. undulates through inky waters. Below: Beachfront bures may entice divers to spend more time on this paradisiacal island than on the reefs.



Air Pacific flight from Los Angeles. You then board Sunflower Airlines for a short 190 mile flight northeast to Laucala.

At Laucala you will be greeted by friendly staff members who will transport your luggage to one of seven bures (Fijian cottages) along the beach. Each exquisitely decorated bura has an air-conditioned bedroom and fan ventilated living room, bar and kitchen. Your kitchen is well stocked with drinks, fruit and snacks. There are five single bures and two bures that offer two bedrooms. Considerable spacing among bures provides privacy found in very few resorts in the world today.

Each morning your breakfast is prepared in your bura by your "bura girl." You decide the night before when you want breakfast and your bura girl will have it piping hot, ready for you to enjoy. Lunch can be served most anywhere—your bura, Malcolm Forbes' house, on the dive boat, in the Treehouse or on the beach—you choose. The evening meal is usually at the main Plantation House unless a barbecue is scheduled near the beach.

Timetables and schedules at Laucala don't exist. At first, this may surprise you but when the staff asks you when and where you want to dive, you'll know Laucala is a special place. If you want to dive in a small group or just with your buddy, no problem. With five boats avail-

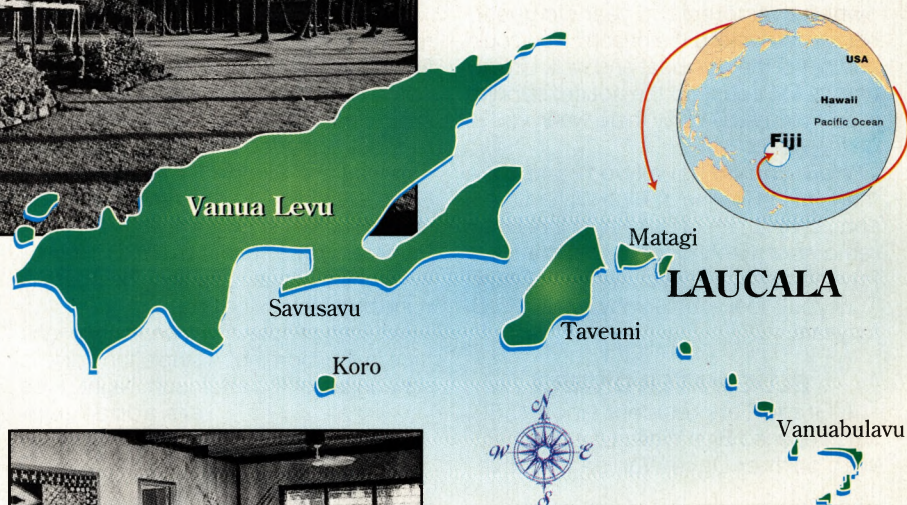
able, just about any combination of time, destination or dive group size is possible. You can easily make two to four dives per day depending upon what other activities interest you.

If you're not spoiled enough, we'll add more. The staff picks up your dive gear from your bura, sets it up on the boat, rinses it between dives and has it ready for the next day of diving. They offer more than 20 regular dive sites, including walls, coral bommies, current passages and reef diving in depths to 130 feet. If you tell them what type of diving you like,

us a view of what seemed like acres of fluorescing red and yellow anemones.

One of our most unusual night dives was on **Boat House Reef**. It actually is the boat dock. You pick the time for the dive, show up at the dock; your dive-master and dive equipment will be ready and waiting. As you sit on the edge of the dock, you will be helped into your gear and then taken on an incredible underwater tour featuring a variety of animal life. At depths from 15 to 50 feet we saw juvenile Sweetlips, lobster, Lionfish, hermit crabs, squid, puffers, starfish, Upside Down Jellyfish, Batfish, shrimp and moray eels. Oh, what a night!

If your quest is for larger fish, you can ask to dive **The Wall**. This vertical, 2,000 foot wall is home to larger pelagics such as Bronze Whalers and tuna. When you tire of the big fish, you can move closer to the wall and swim over the thickly populated soft coral and gorgonians. In addition to the 20 standard



Fiji Forbes Laucala has seven immaculate bures for its guests. Each has a living room, bar and kitchen and either one or two air-conditioned bedrooms.

they will do their best to find sites that fit your needs.

On our trip we wanted to photograph fish, fluorescent anemones and make a couple of night dives. "No problem," was the reply. For our fish dive we went to **Frank's Place** and saw triggerfish, puffers, fish cleaning stations, several types of wrasses and a couple of sharks off in the distance. Our fluorescent anemone dive on **Anemone Reef** gave

dive sites, Laucala's dive boats can reach at least 30 other sites around Matagi, Qamea, Taveuni and the end of the Somosomo Strait.

If you're still not impressed, read on. Each boat is run similar to the skiffs off many worldwide live-aboards. You swim wherever you want. When you have used about 80 percent of your air, come up; the boat will be there to pick you up. This is absolute comfort in diving. There is no swimming against currents, no strain, no stress.

There is a full photo lab at the Plantation House. You can get your slide film processed, rent photo gear or talk to Ric and Carol West about getting a videotape of your trip. They have a full-blown editing system that allows them to make high quality tapes of your dive trip.

The adventuresome birdwatcher or hiker can walk all or part of the 11 mile road surrounding the island. Just decide where

(Continued on Page 141)

Blue Water Divers & Salt Raker Inn

A Great Grand Turk Combination

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY BILL HARRIGAN

Wouldn't it be great if a close friend of yours had a dive operation in a place like Grand Turk? Your friend could take you personally to all the best spots on the spectacular Grand Turk wall. It would be the sort of "Hey, good to see you, let's grab our gear and meet on the beach" diving that friends arrange but with the added benefits of your friend's expertise. And, what if another friend owned a restored 150 year old guesthouse overlooking the beach? You could hop out of the dive boat and walk directly across the beach to the house, strolling in as if you always stay there when you're on the island.

Well, you do have two friends like that—Mitch Rolling of Blue Water Divers and Jenny Smith of Salt Raker Inn. Don't remember meeting them? No matter, a few moments after you arrive in Grand Turk you'll feel you've known them both for years.

BLUE WATER DIVERS

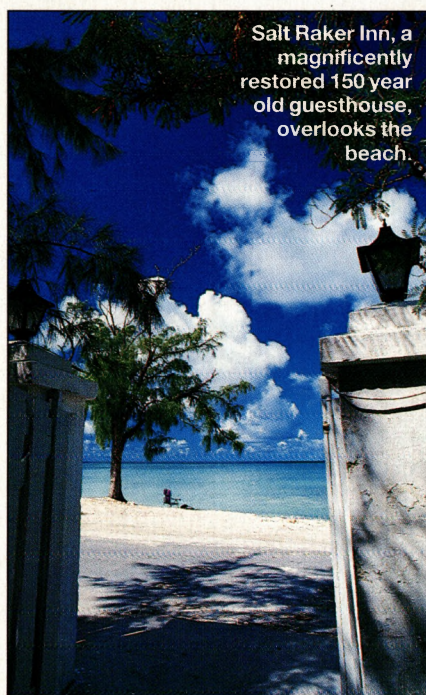
A Grand Turk resident since 1980, Mitch opened Blue Water Divers in 1983. With partner Dave Warren and dive-

master Carl Bean, he has kept the emphasis on quality and fun rather than size. Mitch and Dave are both PADI instructors and do the teaching themselves, from discover diving to divemaster courses. A new Worthington 17 cfm compressor keeps Blue Water Divers' 60 aluminum 80 cubic foot tanks topped off. A full line of Sherwood and Dacor rental equipment is available.

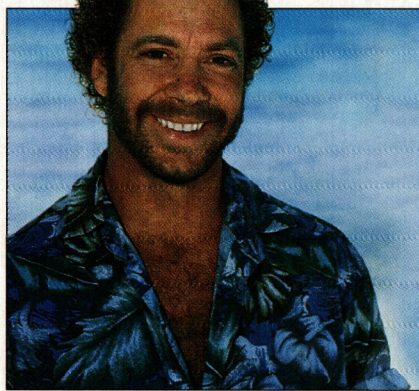
Flexibility and informality are part of the reason diving with Blue Water Divers is fun. Three boats, all with canopies, carpeted decks, dive ladders, oxygen and radio, make it easy to meet almost any request. *Calypso Cruiser* and *Reggae Express* are 22 and 24 foot Carolina Skiffs. *Dancing Fool*, the newest addition to the Blue Water Divers fleet, is a 24 foot Privateer with a 10 foot beam and a cabin for dry storage. Loading the boats is done barefoot on the beach.

You can choose either one or two tank trips in the morning. A single tank dive is scheduled for the afternoon. Night dives are added any-

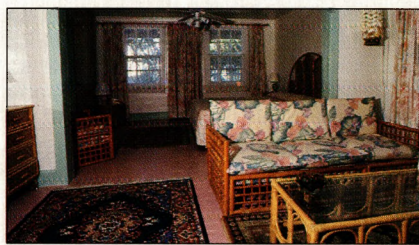
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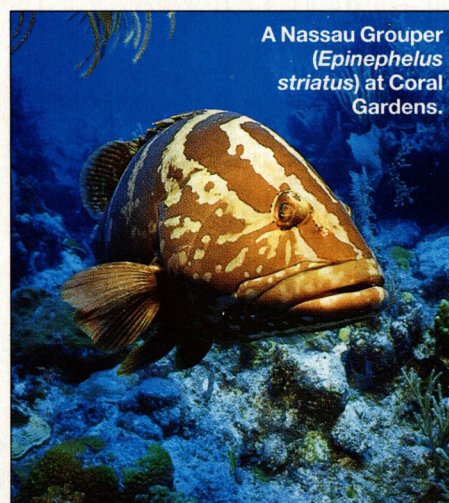
Salt Raker Inn, a magnificently restored 150 year old guesthouse, overlooks the beach.



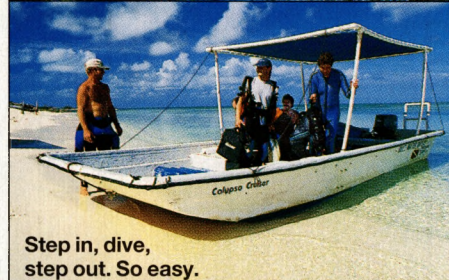
Mitch Rolling, owner of Blue Water Divers.



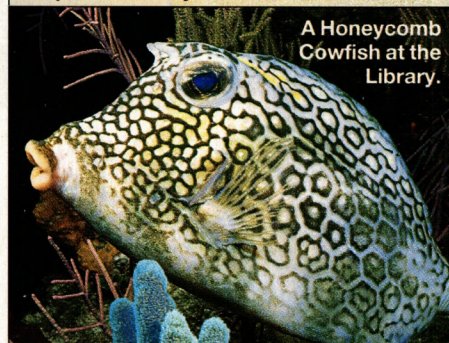
A well appointed room in Salt Raker Inn.



A Nassau Grouper (*Epinephelus striatus*) at Coral Gardens.



Step in, dive, step out. So easy.



A Honeycomb Cowfish at the Library.



Pillar Coral provides a mighty citadel for a lone Squirrelfish.

BLUE WATER DIVERS/ SALT RAKER INN

(Continued from Page 26)

time four or more divers want to go. For experienced divers with a sense of adventure, Blue Water Divers offers a number of special trips on *Dancing Fool* to rarely dived locations on South Caicos, Salt Cay and the wreck of the *Endymion*. Blue Water Divers is also pioneering the exploration of Grand Turk's eastern shore, where a deeper wall begins around the 60 foot mark. Of course, these special trips are weather dependent.

GRAND TURK DIVING

Most Grand Turk diving is on the western wall, a stone's throw off the beach. This is the leeward side of the island, so the water is nearly always calm. Visibility of 100 feet or more is normal. In the summer, the water temperature is around 82°F and Manta Rays are frequently seen by divers. The winter temperature is about 78°F and the water hums with the songs of Humpback Whales migrating to and from Silver Banks to breed. Although the whales are rarely seen in the water, they are often seen from the boats. The reefs generally begin in 25 to 30 feet, sloping gently to the top of the wall at about 45 feet. From there it drops dramatically to depths far beyond recreational diving limits. The vertical face of the wall is covered with coral and sponges, providing some of the best wall diving in the world.

Below 70 feet, the wall at **Black Forest** is thick with delicate Black Corals. A tangle of red and purple Finger Sponges fills the spaces in between, along with brown sheets of Plate Coral. The enormous Orange Elephant Ear Sponge at 75 feet is awesome.

The gold in the arch at **McDonald's** comes from living coral, along with splashes of green and brown. As you exit the arch on the wall side, you are likely to encounter Horse-eye Jacks, French Angelfish or some of the friendly Nassau Groupers that are plentiful around Grand Turk.

Coral Garden is an exceptionally diverse reef. The foundation of the reef is boulders of Star and Brain Coral but everywhere you look there are other species of hard and soft corals. The reef is home to an impressive population of reef fish, including colorful Queen Triggerfish, Peacock Flounders, Creole Wrasse and Yellowtail Snappers.

Aquarium and Library are also packed with fish. One of the best ways to enjoy both spots is to hover quietly over the reef and let the fish come to you. You'll probably need a fish guide to identify them all.

SALT RAKER INN

Old world charm/new world comfort is the best way to describe Salt Raker Inn, an old Bermudian shipwright's house that is halfway into its second century. Now Salt Raker is a beachfront guesthouse with freshly renovated suites. Jenny's hospitality and the friendly, casual atmosphere will make you feel as if you belong there. All of the rooms are air-conditioned, although you may prefer to open the windows and let the ocean breezes blow through. A separate area for rinsing and storing scuba gear is provided.

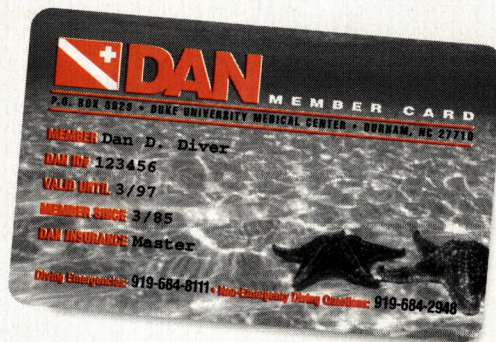
Secret Garden is Salt Raker's courtyard bar and restaurant, featuring excellent food in a tropical garden atmosphere. Mitch and Dave bring their guitars over for an evening of music and humor on Sundays and Wednesdays.

TRAVEL INFORMATION

American Airlines can whisk you from Miami to Providenciales twice a day. A passport is recommended but a birth certificate with an embossed seal and a photo ID will suffice for U.S. citizens. After you clear customs and immigration, just

(Continued on Page 52)

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<http://www.dan.ycg.org>



BERMUDA SHIPWRECKS

Minnie Breslau

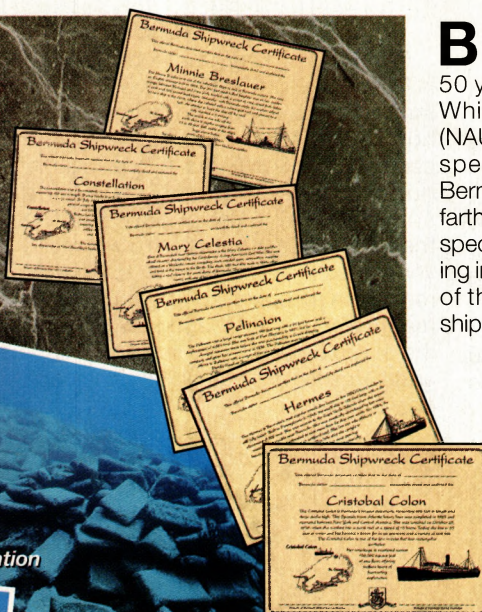
Constellation

Mary Celestia

Pelinaion

Hermes

Cristobal Colon



Bermuda's Shipwreck Certificate Program

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY
BY GERI MURPHY

Bermuda recently launched one of the most innovative programs in the last 50 years of recreational wreck diving. While the scuba training associations (NAUI, PADI, SSI, etc.) have been issuing specialty wreck diving certifications, Bermuda has taken this concept one step farther by issuing free certificates for diving specific shipwrecks. Now divers vacationing in Bermuda can bring home mementos of their exploration of the island's best shipwrecks.

SHIPWRECK CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

Bermuda's five dive operators, together with the Bermuda Department of Tourism, have selected six of their favorite shipwrecks to debut this unique program. These sites are the ones most often requested by visiting divers who wish to see Bermuda's finest undersea attrac-

tions. The wrecks include the *Constellation*, *Cristobal Colon*, *Hermes*, *Mary Celestia*, *Minnie Breslau* and *Pelinaion*.

Upon diving any of these six Bermuda wrecks, visitors will receive a beautifully crafted Bermuda Shipwreck Certificate printed on parchment style paper. Each certificate names the shipwreck, provides a brief history of the wreck and includes a silhouette of the ship prior to sinking. Ample room is provided for the diver's name and date, as well as the name of the dive operator and the signature of the divemaster or boat captain. For visitor convenience, the certificates are issued by the dive operator at the completion of the day's diving.

SIX GREAT WRECKS

Divers consider Bermuda the Shipwreck Capital of the World; it is reputed to contain more than 500 ships that have wrecked and sunk over the past five centuries. Of this number, at least 35 wreck sites are considered interesting enough to be explored by divers. Cruising over these

coral encrusted shipwrecks is like touring an historic maritime museum—minus the restrictive walls. History comes alive and questions tumble through your mind as you examine the pieces and parts of an era gone by.

Of the 35 divable wrecks, Bermuda dive operators have selected some of their best—the shipwrecks that seem to fascinate and amaze both veteran wreck divers and new divers. The deepest of the wrecks is at only 80 feet (the bottom) and most of the wrecks can be explored in 20 to 65 feet of water. All six are real gems.

Constellation: The *Constellation* was an American four-masted, wooden hulled schooner originally built in 1918 and measuring 192 feet in length. During World War II she was pressed into service and used as a cargo vessel. In July 1943, she was bound for Venezuela, carrying a general cargo of building materials, medical drugs and 700 cases of Scotch whiskey.

BERMUDA DIVE OPERATORS

There are dozens of shipwrecks awaiting exploration. If you are interested in visiting Bermuda and diving its wrecks, contact any of Bermuda's dive operators:

Blue Water Divers Co., Ltd.
P.O. Box SN 165
Southampton SN BX
Bermuda
(441) 234-1034
(441) 234-3561 (fax)

Fantasea Diving
Darrell's Wharf
1 Harbour Road
Paget PG 01, Bermuda
(441) 236-6339
(441) 236-8926 (fax)

Nautilus Diving, Ltd.
P.O. Box HM237
Hamilton HM AX, Bermuda
(441) 238-2332
(441) 295-9485
(441) 234-5180 (fax)

Scuba Look
P.O. Box WK 658
Warwick WK BX, Bermuda
(441) 293-7319
(441) 295-2421 (fax)

South Side Scuba, Ltd.
Sonesta Beach Resort
Southampton, Bermuda
(441) 238-1833
(441) 236-0394 (fax)

Today, her hull lies broken apart on a coral and sand bottom in 30 feet of water, exposing petrified sacks of cement, building supplies, glassware and a vast assortment of small items. The *Constellation* was one of the key shipwrecks in Peter

(Continued on Page 66)

Something very different in Bonaire

At SAND DOLLAR, you will notice something very different for a dive resort - condos.

Bonaire, in the Dutch Caribbean, has long been known as one of the world's top dive destinations, and now you can dive with the premier dive resort on Bonaire. Everything at SAND DOLLAR is centrally located, right on the dock. The dive store, photo and video facility, guest equipment storage and restaurant are in one convenient location at

the resort! SAND DOLLAR DIVE & PHOTO is simply unparalleled in the Caribbean for convenience and ease of diving. Relax and watch a sunset in the open air GREEN PARROT restaurant. Then enjoy a studio, 1, 2 or 3-bedroom oceanfront condo, fully furnished, with air-conditioned bedrooms, large living areas, cable TV, full kitchens and private balconies. Call for complete family vacation packages and ask about our kids program - the SAND PENNY CLUB!

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A DIVISION OF ENTERPRISE SUBMARINE LIMITED

Discover Bermuda's superb diving...and the island's newest resort dive centre. Here is a whole new way to dive and explore many of Bermuda's seldom dived wrecks...

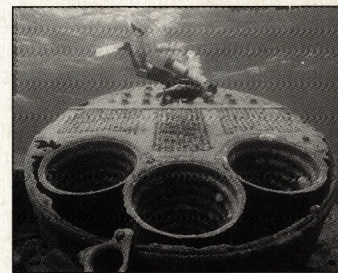
- The only dive centre located at Bermuda's historic East End, and less than a 20 minute boat ride to many seldom dived shipwrecks
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- Dive Bermuda's beautiful coral reefs and explore these fascinating shipwrecks...

<i>Pelinaion</i>	385 ft. Greek steamer
<i>Rita Zovetto</i>	400 ft. Italian cargo steamer
<i>Beaumaris Castle</i>	202 ft. English iron bark
<i>Col. William G. Ball</i>	120 ft. American motor yacht
<i>Cristobal Colon</i>	499 ft. Spanish luxury liner
<i>Iristo</i>	250 ft. Norwegian freighter

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SKIN DIVER OCTOBER 1996 29

Yap's Lionfish Wall

A Vertical Drop-off Inhabited by the Pacific's Most Elegant Reef Fish

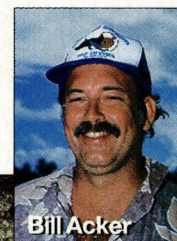
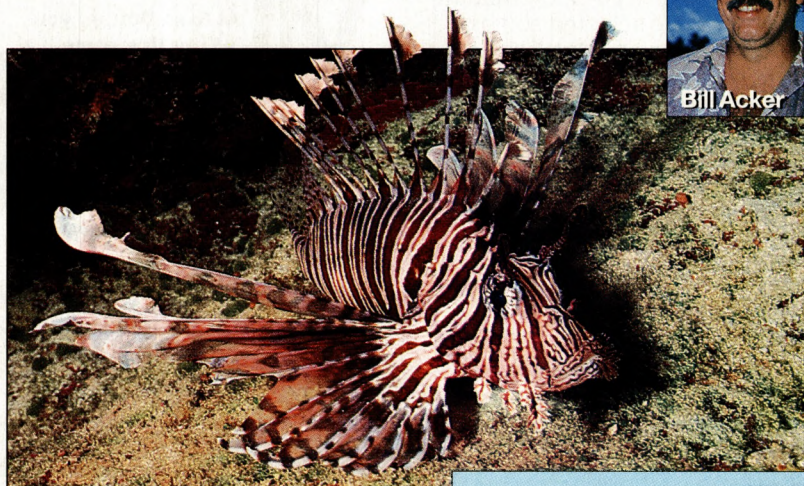
TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY
BY GERI MURPHY

When it comes to beauty and elegance there is no fish more spectacular than the stately Lionfish (*Pterois volitans*). Its magnificent coloration and feathery spines resemble the plumage of a courting bird more than that of a fish. If you have ever dreamed of seeing, photographing or videotaping one of these lovely creatures, there is one place where the visibility is excellent and you can approach with a certain degree of safety.

Although Lionfish can be seen at many reef sites around Yap, **Lionfish Wall** is the place you'll see them during daytime hours. At the southern tip of Yap's outer barrier reef, Lionfish Wall is an impressive vertical drop-off that begins in 20 feet of water and plummets straight down to 160. This site offers stunning underwater visibility, normally exceeding 100 feet.

The top of the wall is comprised of hundreds of stony coral formations, tightly packed together—producing a solid face of living corals. Nestled among the corals are small brightly colored *Tridacna* clams. There are also hundreds of tiny jewelfishes such as the Peach Fairy Basslet, Bartlett's and many others. They sparkle in the sunlight, reflecting a rainbow of colors—orange, yellow, purple or bright magenta. Perched at the lip of the wall are several large anemones that serve as homes for anemonefish families. The most common species in this area is the Orange-fin Anemonefish.

From 25 to 80 feet, the vertical face of this undersea cliff is honeycombed with hundreds of tiny caves and horizontal crevices. Appearing much like an aquatic version of a giant beehive, it is inhabited by thousands of fish. The most noticeable are several Pacific species of soldierfish in bright red or bronze hues.



Bill Acker

The most intriguing occupants of Lionfish Wall are indeed the Lionfish. Here, one can see up to five Lionfish on one dive by simply drifting along the face of the wall. The feathery fish seem quite comfortable in their open caves and small ledges because the face of the wall is mostly in shadow. It is relatively easy to approach these Lionfish since there is plenty of room for a diver to maneuver.

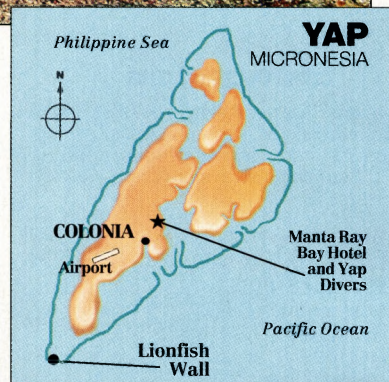
Yet, one must be careful not to touch or harass a Lionfish. Hidden beneath that aquatic plumage are 18 needle sharp spines loaded with venom. Most of the spines are along the dorsal fin but there are others strategically placed at the pelvic fins and other locations. When threatened, the Lionfish will drop its head like a charging bull, causing the dorsal spines to tilt forward and point directly at the source of the threat.

Lionfish are not the only creatures seen along Lionfish Wall's vertical drop-off. The deeper zone (80 to 160 feet) is where divers encounter many pelagics—Dogtooth Tuna, Spotted Eagle Rays, Mackerel, Barracuda and, occasionally, a Manta Ray.

A total of six different species of Lionfish are known to exist in Micronesia waters and at least two have been observed at Lionfish Wall—the *volitans* and the Clearfin.

Yap is one of the states that form the Federated States of Micronesia. The island is in the southwest corner of Micronesia, along the air route from Guam to Palau. Continental Micronesia operates regularly scheduled jet service into Yap at least four days weekly, either directly from Guam or on the return leg from Palau.

As for diving, the Manta Ray Bay Resort is a diver's hotel with 23 air-condi-

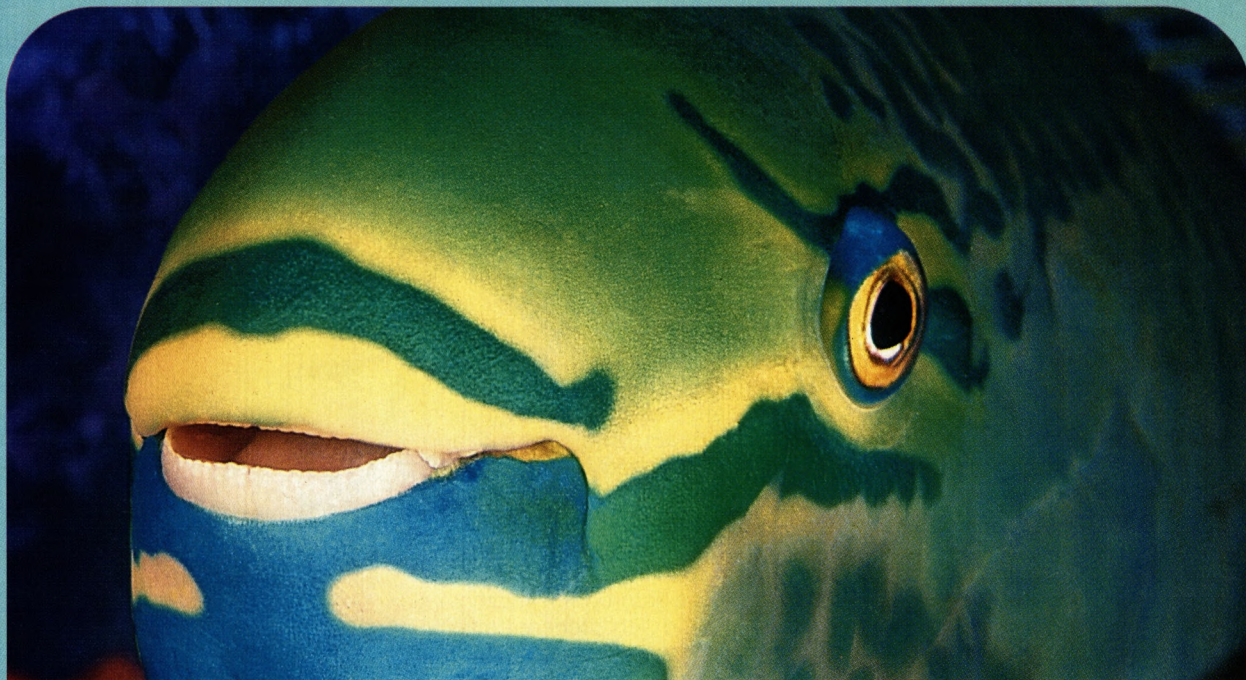


tioned rooms, a restaurant and bar. At the water's edge, the hotel provides a panoramic view of the bay as well as convenient access to diving.

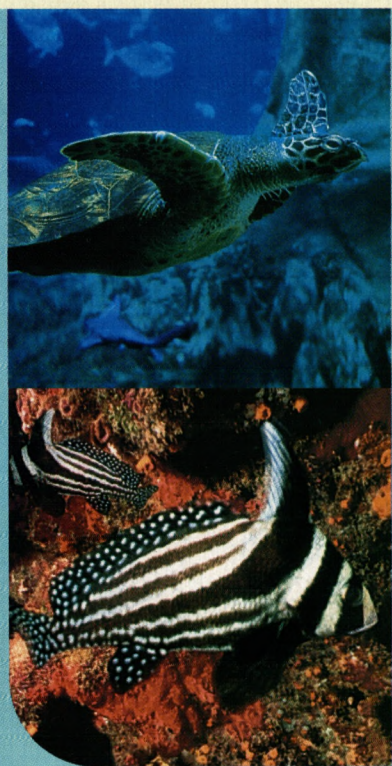
Yap Divers, a full service dive center, is on the hotel grounds. It is just a few steps from the adjacent guestrooms, making it easy to carry cameras or video equipment. The dive center consists of a complete equipment rental department, regulator repair shop, scuba classroom, freshwater wash and dry area and a dive gear storage room for guests. The latest addition is the new photo and video center, called Manta Visions. Operated by underwater photo pro Steve Fish, this facility offers a wide variety of services.

Right in front of the dive center is a dock and five dive boats. All of the dive boats offer shade and are equipped with dive ladders or stern platforms. They are scheduled for both morning and afternoon departures, as well as night dives.

For more information about visiting Yap and diving Lionfish Wall, contact Bill Acker, Manta Ray Bay Hotel and Yap Divers at 011 (691) 350-2300; fax 011 (691) 350-4567 or 011 (691) 350-3841. You can send an e-mail message to Acker at yapdivers@mantaray.com.



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Beneath the surface, the pier's steel columns resemble the thick trunks of pine trees in a dense forest. Curacao's **Old Pier** is actually two large piers some 600 feet apart. The first, a 200 foot wide structure, extends 150 feet out to a short sloping bottom and a depth of 40 feet. The smaller, 130 foot wide structure extends to a depth of 30 feet. On and among these columns is a macro photographer's dream, hosting myriad Christmas Tree and Featherduster Worms, small crustaceans and fish.

Heading back to the boat, I was surprised to see Cherubfish (*Centropyge argi*), one of the Caribbean's two known species of Pygmy Angels, flitting back and forth in the coral rubble. These tiny fellows are usually seen in depths greater than 60 feet; seldom are they ever seen in 15 feet of water! I had often heard that Curacao diving was good—now I know why.

Curacao occupies the region south of the Caribbean's Hurricane Belt. Storms coming close enough to cause a problem of any kind are extremely rare. However, it is in the Windward Islands and trade winds blow across Curacao from the east/northeast at 10 to 20 miles an hour. The year-round temperature is in the mid 80s (°F). While casual, light clothing is fine for the days, Curacao is renowned for its nightlife, so packing some fancier clothing might be a good idea.

The basis for Curacao's strong maritime trade economy is its harbor, one of the largest deep water, sheltered harbors in all of the Caribbean. The entrance to this harbor also splits the island's capital city, Willemstad, in two. In addition to being the center of commerce, Willemstad is colorful and unique, with many buildings featuring traditional Dutch architecture.

Sun and water seekers will be happy to hear that Curacao is blessed with several incredibly scenic beaches. And, a large part of the island is still undeveloped. Touring it to visit Hato Caves (ancient petroglyphs) or old Dutch plantation homes (from the 1700s), you will see a landscape similar to that of the American Southwest. The trade winds fanning the island also keep it fairly arid, with little annual rainfall.

Owing to its scrub and cactus prairies, home to birds, iguanas and a few wild donkeys, the interior of the island is nicknamed "Wasp Waist."

The Princess Beach Resort and Casino is just beyond Willemstad. Occupying a sprawling 1,600 foot tract of beachfront property, overlooking the beginning of Curacao's National Underwater Park, the resort's seven buildings offer a choice of accommodations. These include 143 deluxe

rooms, 108 superior rooms, 21 timeshare units, 8 suites and 1 penthouse—281 rooms in all.

On the grounds are two swimming pools, three restaurants (there's also room service), casino, boutique, gift shop and drugstore, tennis courts, exercise room, playground and nursery for the youngsters, as well as a beauty salon. The resort even provides complimentary shuttle service twice daily, to and from Willemstad.

An affiliate of the Holiday Inn Worldwide franchise, the Princess Beach is a Crowne Plaza Resort, the chain's highest standard of hotels/resorts. Creature comforts include air-conditioning, king and queen sized beds, phone with direct international dialing, coffeemaker (restocked daily), minibar, TV with AM/FM clock radio, safe deposit box, private terrace or balcony, with furnishings and even a hairdryer in the bathroom. Timeshare units also come with kitchenette and are complete with utensils. While electricity in the Ambassador Wing is 220 volts (the resort can provide adapters on request), all other guest wings have 110 volts.

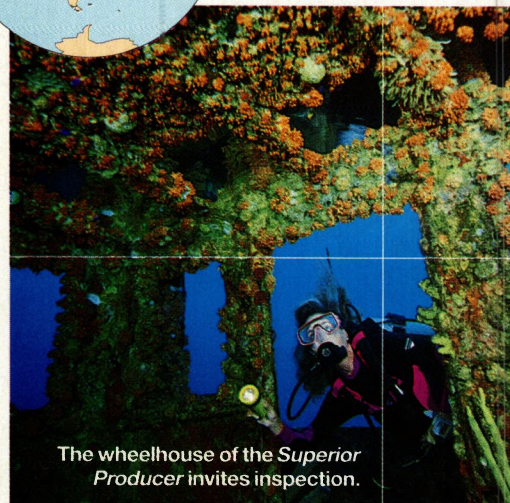
PRINCESS DIVERS

Providing the diving services for this posh resort is Peter Hughes' Princess Divers, conveniently next to the resort's Ambassador Wing (on pilings over the water). Managed by Bonaire veterans Bo and Lex Klein, Princess Divers features a small, quaint shop atmosphere. Everybody will know your name in short order. Services include a large selection of Sea Quest rental equipment, a guest gear storage facility, two husky dive boats and a photo center, complete with rentals and E-6 processing.

Excluding the windward side of the island, Curacao offers three distinct regions on its southern edge, beginning at the western corner and running to the eastern point and tiny Klein Curacao, three miles southeast of the island's southeastern tip.

Although Curacao's normally accessible dive sites lie in the sheltered lee of the island, the 10 to 25 minute runs to any of these sites are often in choppy (two to four feet) seas. These pose no problems, either to Princess Divers' 41 foot, custom built Michael Fitz *Curacao Princess* or its custom 35 foot catamaran, *Cat Dancer*. Both boats are capable of comfortably handling 20 divers each and, with a cruising speed of 25 knots, they deliver guests anywhere they would like to go fast. In addition, both boats have marine heads, large dive platforms and ladders, freshwater showers, cold drinking water, juice or tea, plus all required electronic gear,

Princess Beach Resort and



The wheelhouse of the *Superior Producer* invites inspection.



Right: Rooms at the resort are spacious, bright and comfortable.



Princess Beach Resort's white sand beach and calm waters.

first aid supplies and oxygen. Princess Divers is currently the only Curacao operation featuring both nitrox and nitrox training and certification.

Leaving the dock daily around 9:30 am for the morning two tank trip, Princess Divers concentrates on diving the eastern quarter, in Curacao's recently established National Underwater Park. The park stretches from the Princess Beach Resort all the way to the island's East Point. Along

this stretch are more than 15 excellent sites, most of which are drop-offs that begin in 30 to 37 feet of water and descend to the dark shadow world of the deep.

Popular dive sites include **Shipwreck Point** and **Beacon Point**, which start with a narrow, shallow reef flat 5 to 20 feet deep, bordering a steep drop sloping 80 degrees to a depth of several hundred feet. Along the near vertical contours are large, dense growths of Giant Split-pore Searods, Devil's Seawhips, which look like long, slender serpents rising from the corals, as well as an abundance of Orange Elephant Ear Sponges. If you like orange, this is the place to see it! Attached to

some of the taller sponges are Black and White Crinoids with their 40 white-tipped arms splayed out like some fanciful creature from a sci-fi movie.

The farther east you go, the steeper these drop-offs become, gaining near total vertical proportions at a site named **East Point Drop-off**. Starting 30 feet from the surface, this 1,000 yard stretch of vertical descent drops to 140 feet before turning into a gentler slope to the bottom, wherever that may be. In addition to multitudes of soft and hard corals and Orange Elephant Ear Sponges are several stands of Purple Stovepipe Sponges, sometimes four to five feet tall. Between them and Curacao's bounty of Creole Wrasse, the color purple is ever-present.

Along this same stretch, in depths agreeable to both divers and snorkelers, are the island's two **Tugboat Wrecks** and, of course, the Old Pier. Resting in only 15 feet of water, both tugs sit upright in the middle of a reef, covered with Orange Cup Corals (*Tubastrea coccinea*).

For a wreck dive with a bit more bite, the **Superior Producer** is a freighter, fully loaded with cargo, which accidentally sank several years ago outside the entrance to Willemstad's harbor. She sits upright at a depth of 104 feet and not only is most of her superstructure intact, she has taken on a living, vibrant skin of corals and sponges. Making a home of her interior are schools of Blackbar Soldierfish and Glassey Snappers.

When weather and sea conditions look favorable, Princess will run special trips to Klein Curacao or around to the normally rough, windward side to experience some of Curacao's most virgin diving. Tuesday and Thursday afternoons are reserved for snorkel trips. An afternoon dive or two is only a matter of getting a tank from Princess Divers and going.

Like Bonaire, Curacao delivers some of the hottest shore diving in the Caribbean. Just take any road that passes close to the ocean and there will likely be a terrific dive site just a short distance out. As a rule, Curacao's reef topography, with its steep descents, begins close to shore, often less than 100 feet from the high tide mark. Right at the foot of both Princess Divers and Princess Beach Resort and Casino is **House Reef**, featuring a drop-off similar in profile to Shipwreck Point, with **Cemetery** a short swim to the west. Cemetery features a graveyard of several old car bodies dating back to the '50s and early '60s, plus a medium sized barge. Covering the rusted hulks are myriad sponges and small corals, including more Orange Cup Corals.

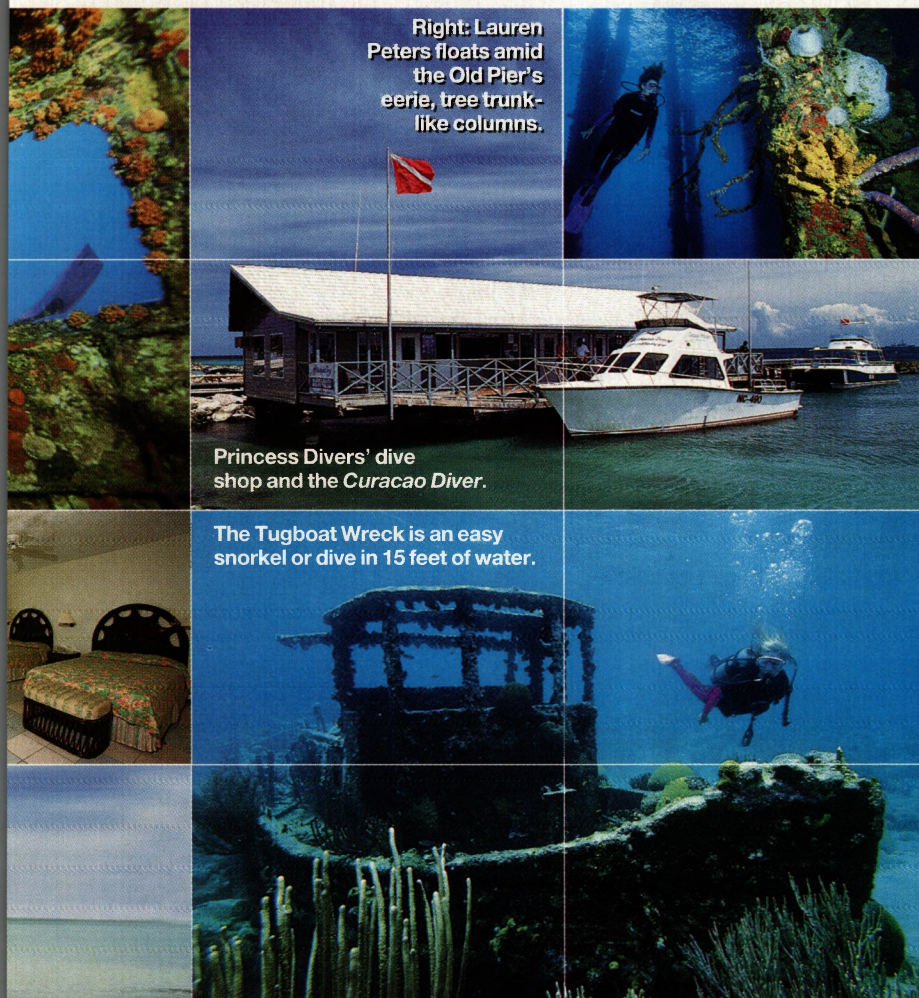
GETTING THERE

Servicing Curacao, Aruba and Bonaire, from both Miami and Atlanta, is the island's national air carrier, ALM (Antillean

Casino/ Princess Divers

Curacao's Finest Topside and Underwater

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY WALT STEARNS



Right: Lauren Peters floats amid the Old Pier's eerie, tree trunk-like columns.

Princess Divers' dive shop and the *Curacao Diver*.

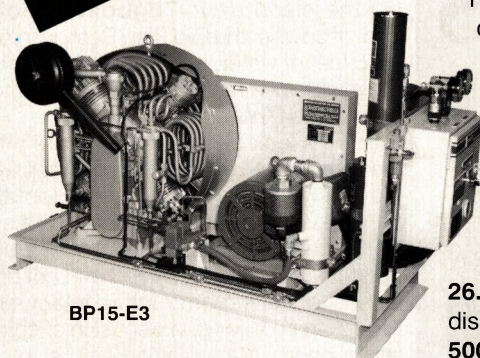
The Tugboat Wreck is an easy snorkel or dive in 15 feet of water.

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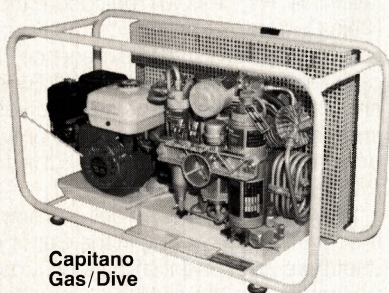
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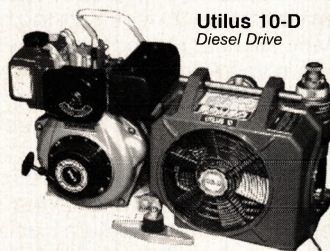


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PRINCESS BEACH/ PRINCESS DIVERS

Airlines). Planes depart two to three times daily from Miami; the flight time to Curacao takes approximately three and a half hours.



For more information on diving packages with Princess Beach Resort and Casino and Princess Divers, contact Peter Hughes Diving at 6851 Yumuri Street, Suite 10, Coral Gables, FL 33146; (800) 9-DANCER, (305) 669-9391 or fax (305) 669-9475.

DIVING MEDICINE

(Continued from Page 16)

curs from ingestion of the Asian Pufferfish, which contains lethal amounts of the poison in the gonads and liver. The toxin blocks the normal action of the nerves and the heart cells. The severity depends on the amount of toxin ingested. In Japan, specially trained fugu chefs are considered experts if they leave small amounts of the toxin in the fish to provide a mild tingling sensation in the mouth. Death from a large dose of toxin is common.

Nerve involvement often begins with muscular twitching and may progress to total paralysis. Speech and respiration may be compromised. The victim may be totally immobile but conscious and aware of all that is going on. Treatment for early poisoning includes removing stomach contents and support of breathing. When paralysis occurs, breathing support is needed for 24 hours or more. The toxic effects usually remit spontaneously if the victim is supported. Sedation should be given to the totally paralyzed patient. No specific treatment has proven effective.

The incidence of poisoning from fish is increasing. You should be aware of these illnesses and make an effort to know where the fish you eat come from. Divers in the tropics are especially at risk for ciguatera poisoning. A fresh fish cookout on the beach during a tropical dive trip has resulted in ciguatera poisoning more than once.



Only Fools
Stretch
the Rules

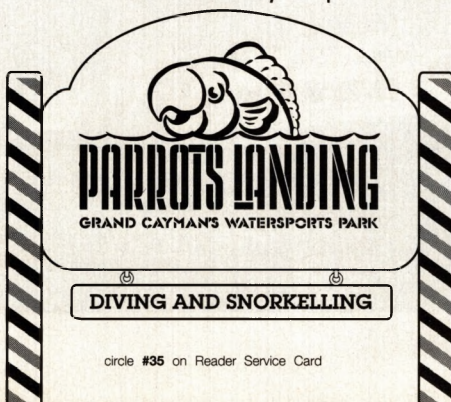
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Sea Fever Cruises

Diving the Best of The Bahamas

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY
BY STEPHEN FRINK

Trip Log, Sea Fever, June 7, 1996: There are times I've spent in the ocean I hope never to forget. Today's snorkel encounter with the wild Spotted Dolphins of the Little Bahama Bank was one of those.

We woke to a slick calm sea with the kind of crystalline turquoise water that shouts, shoot! We'd had some dolphin action most every day and I knew I already had some good photos because I'd had them processed aboard Sea Fever. Still, our group was hungry for one more prolonged swim with these spectacular wild dolphins and today was the day.

We'd barely finished breakfast when Captain Tom Guarino shouted his now familiar "Dolphins off the starboard bow!" We all met on the dive deck to don snorkel gear and prepare underwater cameras. Sometimes the dolphins are in the mood to play and sometimes they're just passing through but you have to be ready each time just in case. From the minute we entered the water I think we all knew this would be a very special encounter. There was a pod of 12 to 14 Spotted Dolphins (*Stenella plagiodon*) seemingly as thrilled to see us as we were to see them. They darted about our group, diving, clicking, leaping from the sea and, occasionally, mating. This was definitely a happy group of dolphins.

Spotted Dolphins may be the most gorgeous of the marine mammals.

Seeing them in the water, my first impression was one of beauty but then admiration for what must be the epitome of hydrodynamics. With a tiny flick of the tail they could speed 20 yards away but, incredibly, they kept coming back. Our clumsy attempts to mimic their grace did not seem to offend



Above: Frequent encounters with sleek Spotted Dolphins (*Stenella plagiodon*) are included in Sea Fever's unforgettable itinerary. This photo: Extraordinary Mt. Olympus.



Sea Fever is a 90 foot aluminum live-aboard with 7 fully air-conditioned staterooms for 14 passengers, a full list of amenities and the ability to cruise at 17 knots. Both nitrox and airfills are available.

them and for two hours they played. I got out of the water and changed film five times during this encounter. Eventually we all got worn out and made our way back to the Sea Fever. When the dolphins figured there was no one left to play with, it was as if some silent signal told them to leave. They didn't come back again this day. But, for that one magic moment in time, we all knew how special the sea can be and how important it is to revere its residents.

The wild dolphin encounter described above happened this summer on a com-



bination dive and snorkel trip aboard the live-aboard *Sea Fever* off the West End of Grand Bahama Island. As incredible as this experience was, for Captain Tom Guarino and the crew of the *Sea Fever*, it was another day at the office. Of course, their "office" offers some of the best diving in all The Bahamas!

This was part of the Northern Bahamas itinerary, operating out of Freeport and including the **White Sand Ridge** dolphin grounds and superlative scuba opportunities amid dive sites such as **Memory Rock**, Mount Olympus, Crystal Palace and the Sugar Wreck. Some charter groups prefer to dedicate their entire week to the Spotted Dolphins but our group of underwater photographers was eager to sample other dive sites as well. Captain Tom has 25 years of experience running live-aboard dive charters in The Bahamas and he was happy to share his personal favorite sites with us.

At **Mount Olympus** we found water clarity in excess of 120 feet and a wealth of colorful filter feeders such as deep water gorgonians, Black Coral and Orange Elephant Ear Sponges decorating a pinnacle at the edge of the abyss. At **Crystal Palace** we found sleeping Nurse Sharks, Barracuda in profusion and wide angle vistas decorated with Bluebell Tunicates. But the one dive we kept returning to was the night dive on the **Sugar Wreck**. Huge

(Continued on Page 118)

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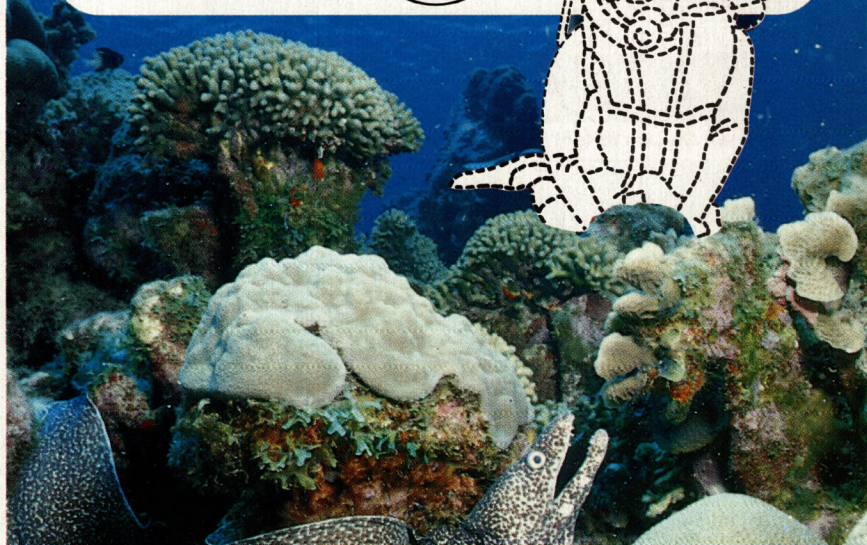
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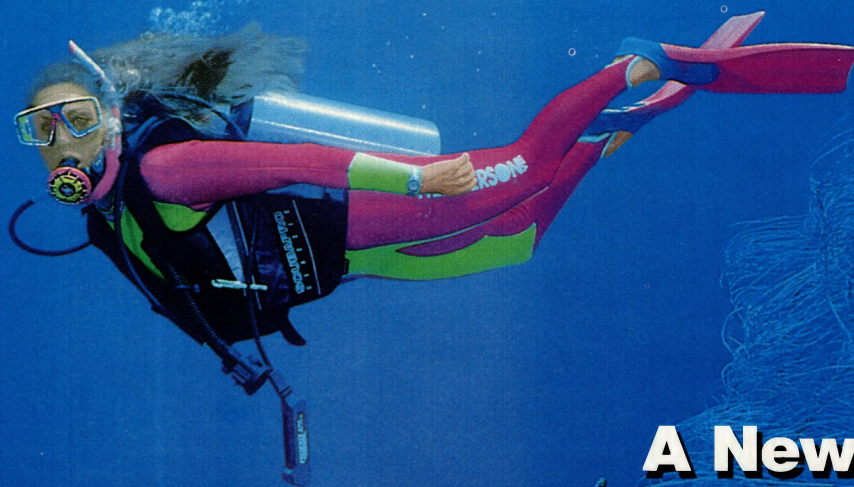


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Grand Cayman's Scuba Sensations



A diver visits Grand Cayman's Far North Wall.



Above: *Safari Diver* is 39 feet long.



Champs III is 36 feet long.

A New Dive Center with Familiar Faces

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY GERI MURPHY

Whether it's your first or tenth trip to the Caribbean, you can always find something new on Grand Cayman. This tropical vacation Mecca is constantly changing and successfully defending its title as the most desirable dive destination in the world. The variety of undersea attractions, high level of diving services and selection of accommodations are incomparable.

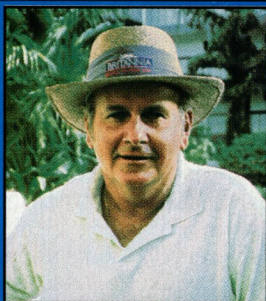
It should be no surprise to discover Grand Cayman has something new in diving—something that you might even describe as sensational. Two of the island's longest established and best known dive operators have combined forces in a remarkable partnership for expanded diving services.

PARTNERS FOR PROGRESS

Peter Milburn (of Peter Milburn's Dive Cayman) and Ron and Kathie Kipp (of Bob Soto's Diving, Ltd.) have formed a new company and opened an ultra modern dive center at the newly remodeled Treasure Island Resort. It is called Scuba Sensations.

The concept is both clever and simple. Scuba Sensations is able to offer a much more expanded menu of diving services, styles of diving and dive site destinations. As company spokesman, Ron Kipp explains, "We dive Grand Cayman—all of Grand Cayman—and in a variety of ways that no one else can match."

Peter Milburn has devoted 17 years to the development and refinement of a small scale dive operation with an intimate at-



Peter Milburn



Ron Kipp



Kathie Kipp



Scuba Sensations' beach towel kiosk.

photo: Walt Stearns

mosphere. All of his dive boats are eight passenger vessels that cater to very small groups of divers, many of whom are very experienced.

Ron and Kathie Kipp have dedicated the past 17 years to upgrading, expanding and developing one of Grand Cayman's largest and best known dive operations (Bob Soto's has been on the island for 39 years). Their eight boats carry no more than 20 divers each and offer a wide variety of different experiences that include one tank, two tank, three tank and night dive trips. The company has been on the leading edge of dive service development, with Ron and Kathie introducing many innovations, such as the Gold Card Program, Stingray City Experience, Double Wall Dive trip and the East End Safari.

With their combined facilities, boats and staffs, Scuba Sensations can now

offer the best of both worlds. Designed to provide the customer with the best possible selection of the best possible diving, the new company will be diving all four sides of Grand Cayman, including the East End. The dive boats depart early morning, mid-morning, afternoon and evening.

TREASURE ISLAND RESORT

It is no small coincidence that Grand Cayman's newest mega dive center is based at Grand Cayman's most recently renovated beachfront resort. Scuba Sensations' headquarters is right off the magnificent open air lobby of Treasure Island—one of Grand Cayman's top dive hotel properties.

Right on Seven Mile Beach, close to George Town's shopping district, Treasure Island is a very comfortable 290 room resort that combines the informality of a tropical island with ultra modern creature comforts. All of the guestrooms are air-conditioned and furnished with ceiling fans, color satellite TV, in-room security safes, telephone and private bath and shower. Decorated in a casual tropical style, each room has a balcony or patio offering a lovely view of the ocean, swimming pool or beautifully landscaped hotel grounds.

The hotel sits on a sprawling 15 acre beachfront estate, with plenty of room for privacy and recreation. Facilities include two sparkling freshwater swimming pools, a children's wading pool, spa, a swim-up pool bar, outdoor snack restaurant and patio, water-sport kiosk for beach towels (free to hotel guests), tennis courts and a variety of watersports that include windsurfing, parasailing, personal watercraft, catamaran sailing trips and, of course, a full service dive shop.

As for dining and evening entertainment, Treasure Island Resort offers some of Grand Cayman's finest. Captain Flint's pool bar and grill hosts nightly theme dinners served under the stars. Top of the Falls is the hotel's more formal air-conditioned restaurant, offering continental cuisine. A coffeeshop, bakery and deli round out the choices.

For those who travel on plastic, it will be reassuring to know that Treasure Island Resort honors American Express, MasterCard, Visa and Diners Club. U.S. currency and/or traveler's checks are also accepted.

DIVING SERVICES

Scuba Sensations offers a selection of diving experiences as extensive and delightful as any gourmet restaurant menu. It's all good; the choice depends on your

(Continued on Page 65)



Treasure Island Resort's freshwater swimming pool.



Treasure Island Resort's guestrooms (above) and open air lobby (below).



photo: Walt Stearns

photo: Walt Stearns



Scuba Sensations' underwater video editing center.



Scuba Sensations Dive Center.

As a boy, Francis Toribiong first discovered the beautiful coral reefs and incredible marine life of his island home, Palau. Over the years, his fascination grew as he began finding and identifying the most exciting dive sites the island archipelago had to offer. Today, many of Palau's most popular spots are known because of Francis' life-long exploration.

One of the original dive operators in Palau, Francis opened Fish 'n Fins in 1978. Visitors to Palau in those early days remember him and his group of fisherman dive guides. With their amazing knowledge of Palau's intricate reefs, Francis and his captains could take divers virtually anywhere, night or day, dropping them with pinpoint accuracy onto Palau's most exquisite underwater wonders.

Much has changed over the years for Fish 'n Fins but, as with most successful, long-term businesses, much remains the same. For, although the operation has kept pace with the times, with its own fleet of modern dive boats, a well stocked rental department and the other amenities today's divers expect, it has also retained Francis' original goal—taking divers where they want to go and giving them the dives they want, rather than making them simply fit into a standardized schedule of sites and dive profiles.

"The people who come with us can dive to their own wishes," says Francis. "We certainly make sure they maintain safety. However, we let them decide

which sites they want to visit and to dive their own profiles."

Because of this approach, Fish 'n Fins clientele enjoys a wide range of dive sites, including some outside Palau's most frequently dived areas near Koror. Even remote sites off Peleliu and Babelthuap are available at no additional cost. After days of two tank dives on the reefs, there are free trips to such popular places as **Jellyfish Lake**, **Chandelier Caves** and **Soft Coral Arch**. And, if that

isn't enough, night dives are available—including dives with the Chambered Nautilus, for only \$10 extra per person.

Fish 'n Fins is in central Koror, adjacent to the popular Marina Hotel. With five, 26 foot Yamaha cabin cruisers, each with plenty of shade, fresh water, a radio, oxygen and powered by twin 200 hp outboards, the operation can comfortably handle 60 divers per day. Boats depart for two tank, all day excursions, with lunch included, from the dock at the Marina Hotel site but can also pick up divers at the Palau Pacific Resort dock.

For divers needing equipment, the operation's rental department is well stocked with a complete range of U.S. Divers gear.

For those seeking instruction, the staff includes a PADI and a NAUI instructor and five certified dive-masters (although dive tours are Fish 'n Fins' main focus).

Francis' list of favorite dive sites reflect his undiminished sense of exploration and discovery. The first he mentions is the **Tip of Siaes Corner**, a spot not on the list of well known Palau dives. At the farthest point of Siaes Wall, a steep drop-off begins in 50 feet of clear water. A sheer wall, decorated with large gorgonian fans and draped with colorful soft corals, plummets into the depths. The area is home to schooling jacks and Pyramid Butterflyfish and is loaded with Palau's favorite denizens—Pacific Gray Reef Sharks, in a large, ever present school.

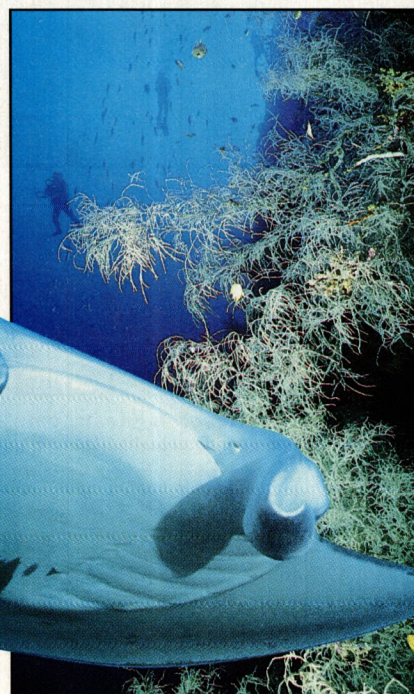
Another unusual spot on Fish 'n Fins' itinerary is **Ngerdmau Channel**, off

Discovering Palau

Fish 'n Fins



Fish 'n Fin's dive adventures are vast and varied, including the sheer drop-off at Ngemelis Wall (top center), *Mastigias* jellies at Jellyfish Lake (above) and Manta Rays (right), the gentle giants of German Channel.



Above: A swarm of jacks at Blue Corner. Left: Peleliu Corner has it all—a precipitous wall beginning at 45 feet, luxurious Black Corals and the possibility of pelagic visitors.

Babelthuap, to the north of Koror. A 40 to 50 foot channel opens onto the wall at the edge of the outer reef. Beautiful corals and reef tropicals make the site a splendid dive; resident Manta Rays make it a great one.

At the other end of Palau's large lagoon is another of Francis' favorite spots—exciting **Peleliu Corner**. At the southernmost tip of the lagoon, where two prevailing currents cross, this site is pure excitement. A drift dive along the rough, vertical wall sweeps divers past Black Corals, huge gorgonian fans, large groupers and schools of Horse-eye Jacks. Just off the wall is a huge congregation—usually 20 to 30 at a time—of Gray Reef and Blacktip Sharks, who patrol incessantly, well within camera range.

Beginning in December 1996, Fish 'n Fins will add even newer, more exciting dive options, with the operation of its new Albatross Sea Plane. Divers will be able to visit distant sites hundreds of miles to the north, toward Yap and to Helen's Reef in the south, a 30 mile long, open ocean reef system that has scarcely been explored by divers. Francis' pio-



Continental Micronesia operates island hopper service to Palau with a change of planes in Guam, originating in Honolulu.

neering spirit will continue to make Palau's best and most exciting diving available to visitors who share his sense of discovery and underwater adventure.

GETTING THERE

Palau is reached from Hawaii on Continental Micronesia, with a change of planes in Guam. For complete information on Fish 'n Fins' dive adventures, contact your favorite dive travel agent or Fish 'n Fins, P.O. Box 142, Koror, Palau 96940; telephone 011 (680) 488-2637, fax 011 (680) 488-1725.

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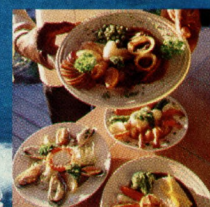
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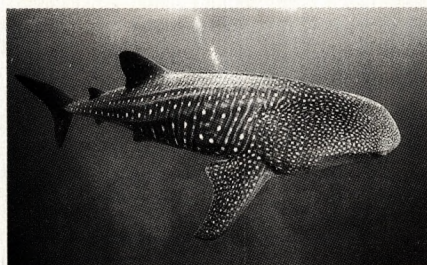
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Palau—
Jean-Michel Cousteau
Nikonos Adventures
Truk—
Jean-Michel Cousteau
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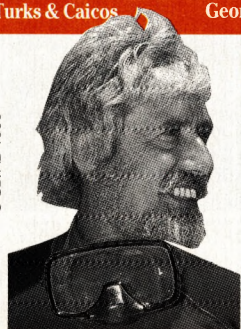
NOVEMBER 1996

Kona—
Jean-Michel Cousteau
Nikonos Adventures

DECEMBER 1996

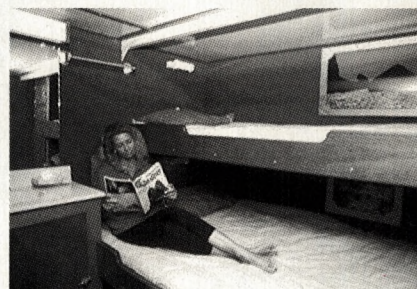
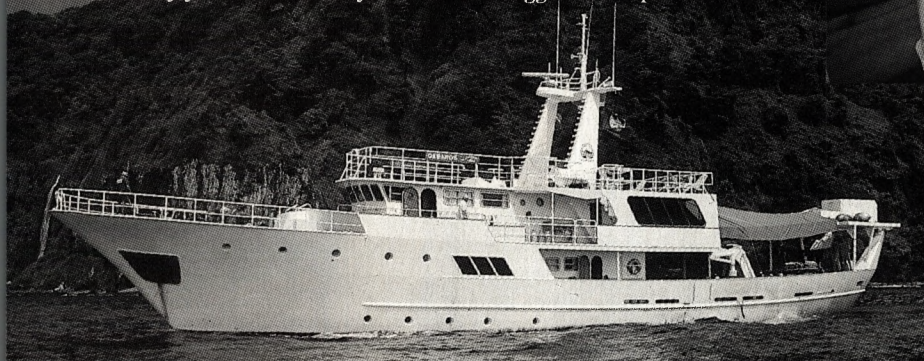
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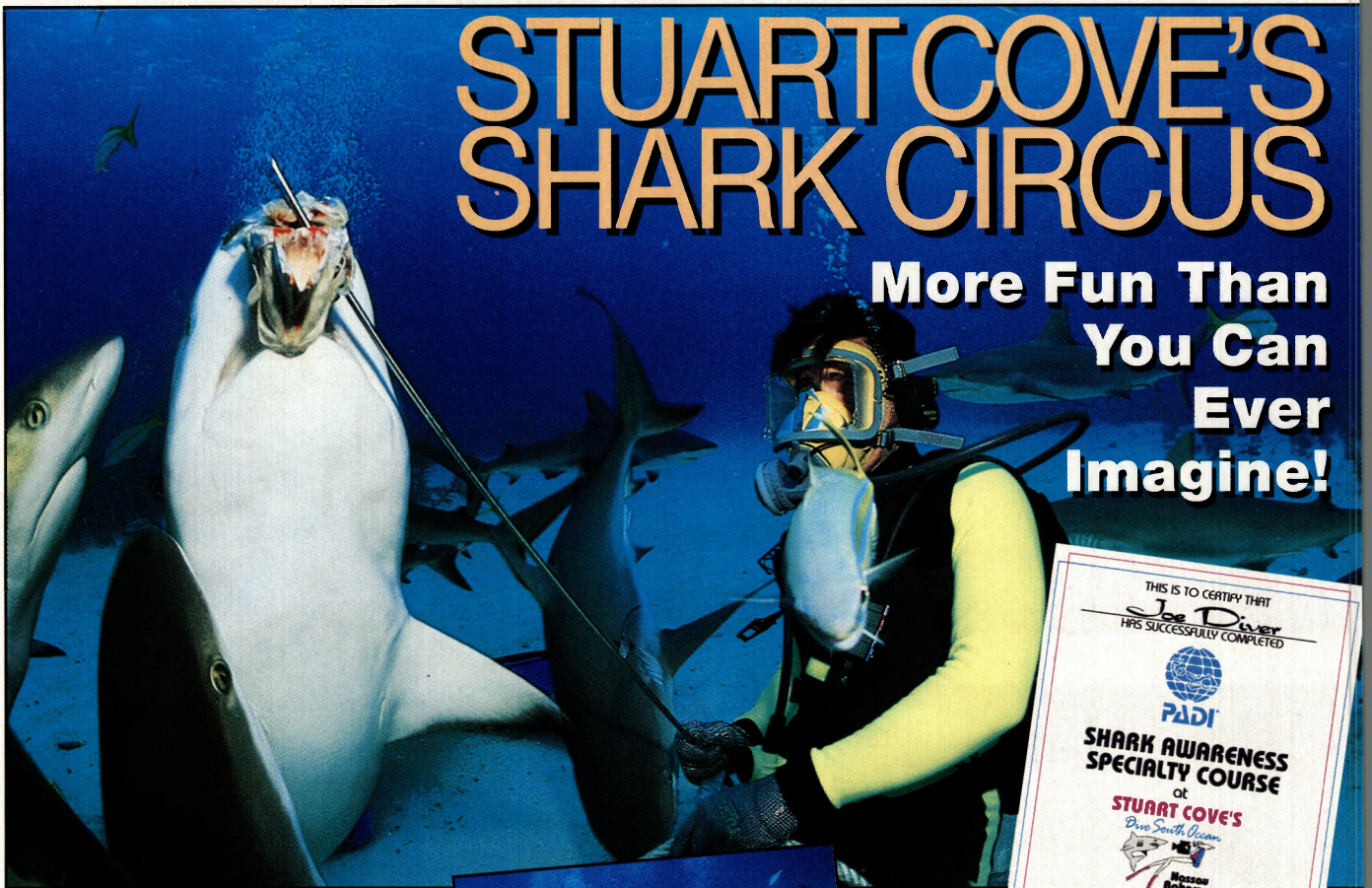
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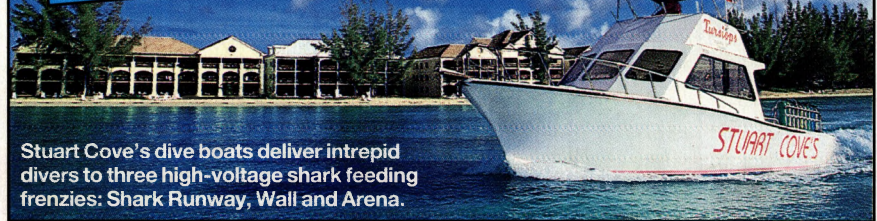


TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY
BY STEPHEN FRINK

A dive vacation at Stuart Cove's Dive South Ocean is more fun than a day at the circus. With shark dives as the main attraction and Stuart Cove as the ringmaster, there is so much action divers keep coming back for more! In this submarine circus, the three rings are distinct shark dives known as **Shark Runway**, **Shark Wall** and **Shark Arena**. Each site is different and features unique behaviors and its own population of Caribbean Reef Sharks.

Ring #1—Shark Runway: This site is only about a mile from the docks at Stuart Cove's Dive South Ocean and features a small patch reef rich with cleaning stations in the midst of a vast, sandy bottom. The drop-off is within easy swimming distance, as is the wreck of the *Bahama Mama*, but shark enthusiasts will likely miss the subtle beauties of this reef because, from the moment the divers hit the water, sharks surround them. The depth here is only about 45 feet and the water is usually remarkably clear despite being so near shore.

This is one of my personal favorite sites for shark photography because the shallow depth means ample ambient light and bottom time. The sand here is coarse and heavy enough to quickly settle to the



Stuart Cove's dive boats deliver intrepid divers to three high-voltage shark feeding frenzies: Shark Runway, Wall and Arena.

bottom once stirred up by either sharks or divers. There is usually a gentle current, which will wash away any turbidity generated by the shark feeding. Of course, the main advantage to the photographer is that the resident Caribbean Reef Sharks are used to being fed here and are brazen about seeking handouts. They show up quickly and get very close.

The feeding routine involves Stuart or one of his staff (the men's feeding arm is

Top: Stuart Cove utilizes a polespear and chainmail gloves to safely feed a Caribbean Reef Shark. Above: PADI Shark Awareness Certificate. Left: Eleven sharks at Shark Runway; fast, close, heartstopping action.

protected by a chainmail glove reaching to the shoulder) using a polespear to extract chunks of bait from a special hinged feeder box. They are careful to take out only one piece at a time and then close the box. Unlike other shark encounters, where the bait is tethered to a line or a bait box is open to indiscriminate feeding, this prevents a feeding frenzy from getting out of control and prolongs the activity. Plus, Stuart and the Dive South Ocean shark

wranglers are skilled in leading the sharks, via the bait, to the front of a photographer's dome port for the perfect picture.

RING #2—Shark Wall: This site is a vertical precipice along the deep abyss known as the Tongue of the Ocean. Beginning in about 75 feet of water, the wall is a lovely dive, with large purple Stove-pipe Sponges and whip corals adding to the wide angle vista. However, because this site is near Shark Arena, Caribbean Reef Sharks, Nurse Sharks and groupers have come to associate divers with food and remain in the vicinity throughout the dive. Here is a perfect opportunity to get that classic shot of a sponge and coral foreground with sharks silhouetted in the background. The groupers here are exceptionally bold and, even without food to entice them, will allow photos to be taken of them with a Nikonos Close-up Outfit.

Shark Wall is usually the first dive of a two tank excursion, the second dive takes place at Shark Arena. This works especially well because the wall is a little deeper and the sharks and attendant scavengers remain on the scene hoping for more food. Shark Wall doesn't have the high voltage thrills and adrenaline pump of either the Runway or the Arena but it is more typical of how sharks might be encountered in the wild, without the stimulus of bait in the water.

RING #3—Shark Arena: For many, this site is the epitome of shark diving. Amid spur and groove coral canyons in about 50 feet of water (about 40 yards shoreward of Shark Wall) Stuart has established an absolutely reliable and thrilling encounter with a population of primarily female Caribbean Reef Sharks. This was the first site that sharks were consistently seen off New Providence more than a decade ago. It is also where the first efforts were made to gradually condition the sharks to overcome their natural reticence and take bait from

divers. As a result of thousands of dollars worth of bait and long years of hard work (although even Stuart would have to admit a large measure of sheer fun was involved as well), one of the world's best shark encounters has evolved.

The Dive South Ocean shark team will pick a sandy spot to situate the feeder and bait box. Divers form a semi-circle around the action, with their backs to high profile corals. From the moment the bait box is in place, the shark action is fast and furious. The sharks circle constantly to be in position, then dart in to grab the bait. Along the outer perimeter of the action there are wonderful opportunities to see the sharks up close (and in exceptionally clear water). Closer to the feeding, however, is where there are those heart-stopping visions of dropping pectoral fins, nictitating eye membranes and cavernous maws with rows of sharply serrated teeth chomping down on the bait. Truly this is like no other experience in diving and should be on any list of must-do dive adventures.

In addition to the voyeuristic aspect of this three ring circus, Stuart Cove's Dive South Ocean also offers an educational element. Its Shark Awareness Course is conducted as a full class on the island or with a Start At Home component allow-

(Continued on Page 54)



Above: E-6 processing on the premises allows guests to review shark photos without delay. Below: Stuart and Michelle Cove.

New Providence Island
The Bahamas

Nassau

STUART COVE'S
Dive South Ocean

Shark Runway

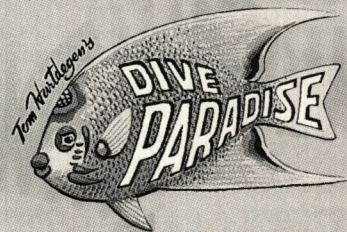
Shark Wall

Shark Arena

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The Art of Breath Holding

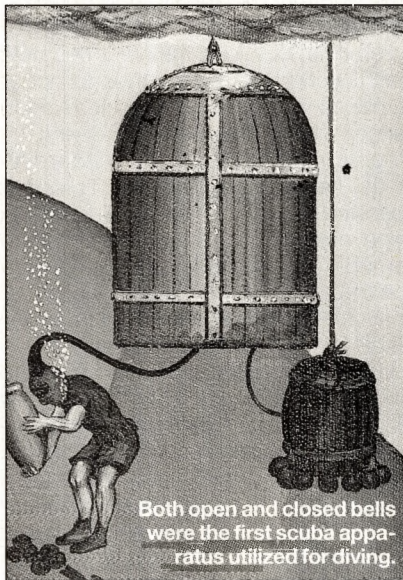
BY E.R. CROSS



There is no argument that the art of breath hold diving was the first skill developed by divers. Probably the earliest effort to obtain air at depth was through long reeds similar to

our snorkels. At depths more than two or three feet this could have caused injury to early divers.

To safely go deeper divers needed air pumped to them or a reliable, portable air supply. If the former—perhaps a diving bell—was used, it had to be large enough to contain the diver. Both systems mentioned above are considered self-contained underwater breathing apparatus (SCUBA) and supply air to the diver at a pressure equal to the water at depth. Beginning nearly 3,000



years ago, both open and closed bells were the first apparatus to permit underwater breathing by divers.

INTERPRETING WATER

Knowledge is one side of the triangle of safety. Safety in diving will take on new meaning when divers fully understand what they see. Since water conditions are mainly linked to atmospheric conditions, reading the water must begin before a dive. This is a critical first step toward safety when diving an area for the first time.

While still on the surface—Stop, Look and Listen. Wind is air in motion. Wind generates waves and helps cause currents. If you can hear wind as it blows through poles, wires, around buildings and through boat rigging, it is strong enough to generate waves that may be troublesome. If it is an offshore wind,

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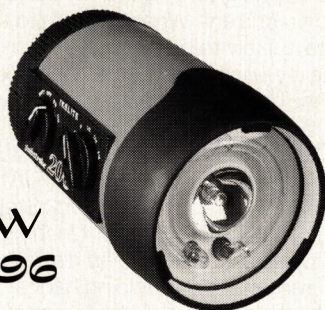
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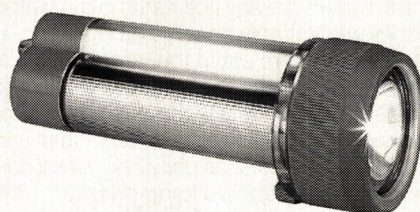


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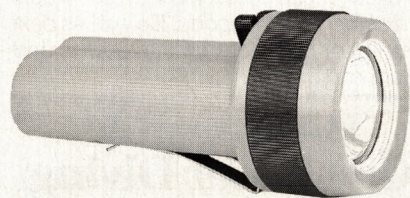


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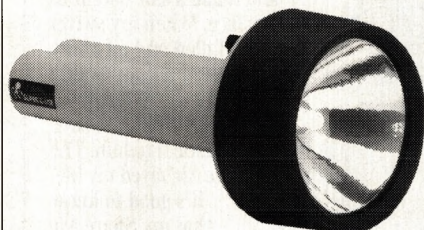
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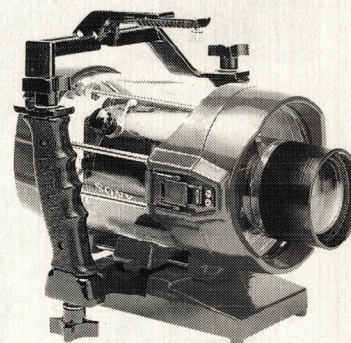


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TECHNIFACTS

with offshore waves, it can be even more of a problem. This is particularly true of waves that are short and choppy, making swimming difficult. Waves generated by an onshore wind are usually less difficult to cope with and may even be useful in returning from the dive.

Before entering the water, look for the presence of major current flow. Such currents will usually be apparent by a line of discolored water where two bodies of

water meet and, frequently, by a distinctive surface grunge line of befouled water. If there are any pollutants in the water they will probably be in the grunge line.

Once divers are in the water they are subjected to whatever the water is doing. The first important step to dive safety is to become aware of as many aspects of the surrounding water as possible. During descent divers should keep oriented with wind, waves and currents. When reaching the bottom relate this orientation to bottom conditions; the direction of currents, swells, surge and movement of marine life. Unless diving from a chase boat, it is

usually preferable to move against the current. Return to the dive site is then down current. When a return to the dive site is likely to be a surface swim, adjust the dive pattern to permit the return to be in the direction of the wind and waves.

ONE MORE U/W EARTHQUAKE

An interesting and unusual U/W earthquake was reported by Jack Steinmetz. Jack was working on a 14 inch pipeline in 270 feet of water. He and his dive partner were inside a dry welding habitat making a hyperbaric weld. Jack wrote, "While making the final adjustments to the alignment, both ends of the pipe suddenly started to jump about. My dive partner thought the DPV (dynamic positioning vessel) was malfunctioning and running off, dragging the habitat by our umbilical." Jack relayed the events to the surface personnel on the WADS (Welding and Diving Station). The divers were ordered to make an emergency evacuation of the habitat, return to the bell and to the saturation system on the vessel.

Things calmed down a bit and the welders returned to their habitat. After a few hours back on the job word came down to them, "You have just ridden out a magnitude 6.0 quake centered near us." Jack said in closing, "The earthquake on the bottom was very much like one on the surface except for the lack of a rumbling noise."

Keep us posted if you experience an earthquake while underwater. A pattern of experiences is developing. Technifacts will appreciate all reports. Be with us next month for more interesting reports and information. 🐠

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Spare Air unit and began to breathe from it. I swam over to my buddy, grabbed his octopus, and made a safe ascent to the surface. When my swivel o-rings failed and all of my air flowed out my buddy was at least 30 feet from me. I could not have

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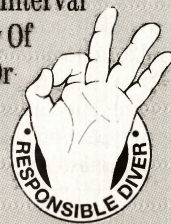


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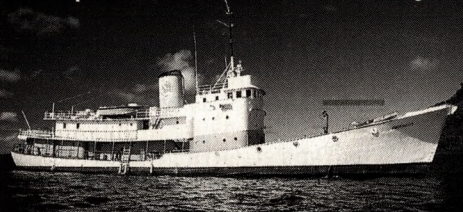


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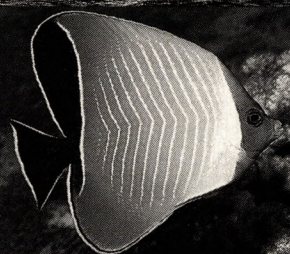
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Truk Lagoon

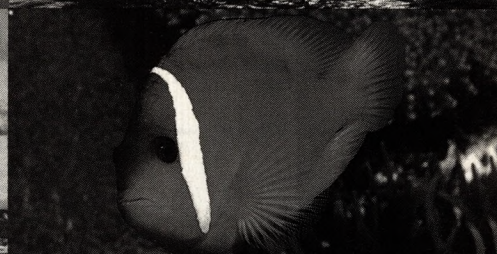


Ocean Hunter

Palau

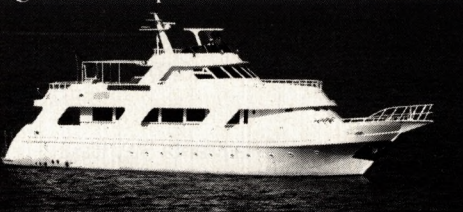


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Dive Notes

BERMUDA DIVE OPERATORS OPEN IN FALL: Bermuda's five dive operators recently announced they will remain open for business throughout the fall months (through November) of this year. According to an island spokesman, the best diving on Bermuda's reefs and

shipwrecks is during the fall, when the underwater visibility dramatically improves (100 feet plus) and water temperature is fairly warm.

All five dive operators will remain open until November 30th and three of the operators (Blue Water Divers, Fantasea Diving and Nautilus Diving) will remain open year-round. Most of Bermuda's hotels, resorts, retail stores and restaurants are open on a year-round basis.

For diving reservations and more information about Bermuda diving, you can call any of the five dive operators:

Blue Water Divers, (441) 234-1034; Fantasea Diving, (441) 236-6339; Nautilus Diving, (441) 238-2332; Scuba Look, (441) 293-7319; and Southside Scuba, (441) 238-1833. You can also obtain a copy of Bermuda's new *Dive Guide and Shipwreck Program* booklet by calling the Bermuda Department of Tourism at (212) 818-9800. 🐠

SISTER ISLANDS FLIGHTS: Island Air continues to provide twice-daily inter-island air service between Grand Cayman and its sister islands, Cayman Brac and Little Cayman, despite the discontinuance of its toll-free phone number. The airline operates a 19 passenger Twin Otter, plus a six passenger islander, on a seven days a week schedule. Island Air is regarded as the preferred airline for divers traveling to Little Cayman and Cayman Brac.

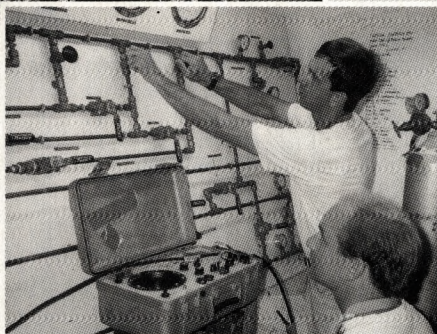
For reservations or information on flight times, you can call Island Air at (345) 949-5252, Monday through Friday from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm Cayman time or fax (345) 949-7044. 🐠

YAP DIVE GUIDE: The Manta Ray Bay Hotel has just published *Manta Ray Bay Diving and Snorkeling Guide to Yap*, a new 44 page dive guide. The booklet contains detailed information on 35 dive sites around Yap, plus a map indicating their geographic locations. The dive sites reviewed include all Manta Ray cleaning stations as well as the island's best vertical wall sites, cavern dives and Eagle Ray sites. Also contained in the booklet are two pages describing Yap's best snorkeling locations, as well as helpful information about diving with Manta Rays and the behavioral characteristics of these remarkable fish.

Copies of the new Yap dive guide are available through the Manta Ray Bay Hotel or by contacting Bill Acker, Manta Ray Bay Hotel, P.O. Box MR, Yap, Federated States of Micronesia; 011(691) 350-2300, fax 011(691) 350-4567, e-mail yapdivers@mantaray.com. 🐠



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Dive Notes

CAYMAN SANCTIONS NITROX: In an historic move, the 57 member Cayman Islands Watersports Operators Association (CIWOA) approved the use of oxygen enriched air, also called nitrox. The association's 40 dive operator members voted in favor of the decision during the June 13 general meeting. The subject has been debated by CIWOA for two years and the recent decision now allows use of nitrox by divers who are IANTD, ANDI, NAUI, PADI specialty EANx certified divers or who want to become nitrox certified in Cayman. In January, CIWOA approved the use of oxygen enriched air by CIWOA divemasters (who had completed nitrox training courses) for a trial one year period. 🐠

REDUCED PRICES ON M/V WIND DANCER IN THE BAY ISLANDS: Peter Hughes Diving, Inc. has a special discount available on its luxury live-aboard vessel, the M/V *Wind Dancer*. A \$200 discount will be applied to charters between September 14 and December 31, 1996, excluding the weeks of Thanksgiving and Christmas. All current bookings for this period will also be discounted.

The Bay Islands are renowned for exceptionally clear water, spectacular walls and colorful shallow water coral gardens packed with one of the greatest collections of sponges and corals in the Caribbean. There are also exciting opportunities to dive with a variety of pelagic fish.

To take advantage of this special discount, call your travel planner or contact Peter Hughes Diving, Inc., 6851 Yumuri Street, Suite 10, Coral Gables, FL 33146; (800) 9DANCER, (800) 932-6237, (305) 669-9391, (305) 669-9475 (fax). Or, on the internet at <http://www.winnet.net/dancer/> or <http://www.peterhughes.com> or e-mail dancer@winnet.net. 🐠

BLUE WATER DIVERS/ SALT RAKER INN

(Continued from Page 27)

walk into the domestic side of the terminal, where a number of inter-island air services provide immediate flights to Grand Turk. It's as easy as taking a cab to your hotel in a big city but a whole lot more fun.

The U.S. dollar is the official currency of the Turks and Caicos and the electrical standard is 110 volts/60 cycles, the same

as in the U.S. The islands stay on Eastern Standard Time year-round.

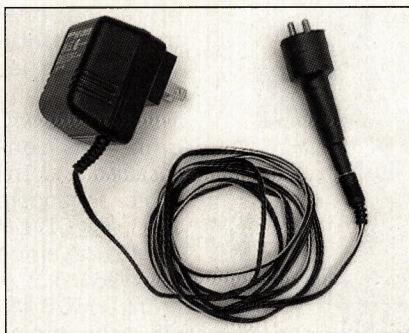
Blue Water Divers and the Salt Raker Inn is a combination that just seems to go together naturally, like sunshine and beaches. For reservations or more information, contact Blue Water Divers by phone or fax at (809) 946-2432. The Salt Raker Inn can be contacted by phone at (809) 946-2260 or by fax at (809) 946-2817. Tell them you're another old friend coming to visit. 🐟

MINELAB'S EXCALIBUR

(Continued from Page 14)

turning the pointer knob at the end of the electronics cylinder. Pin Point operation registers all metals and allows you to quickly find a target. Disc mode cuts out signals from ferrous metals and allows you to use the discrimination control knob to eliminate other unwanted items. Three other control knobs allow you to customize the detector's responses: Volume, Sensitivity (including an auto setting) and Threshold (also on/off). Set the Volume to your comfort level; set the Threshold tone to just audible and set the Sensitivity according to the depth to be searched and the soil or bottom conditions.

Aside from its power, selectivity and simplicity, the Excalibur also offers another feature to make searching fast and easy. The



The Excalibur's battery charger. A full charge takes 12 to 14 hours and will power the metal detector for 15 hours.

arrangement of the eight inch searchcoil ("Double D") allows a uniform depth, straight line detection pattern completely across the coil. You'll immediately detect targets that pass anywhere under the coil and then, by turning the coil 90 degrees, get their exact location with a crossing swipe.

There's even more good news about the Excalibur in the easy to understand instruction manual but operation is no more complicated than described here. After a few minutes' practice, you'll feel like a real "coin shooter."

The Excalibur is manufactured by Minelab Electronics of Stepney, South Australia and is available in the U.S. through several expert dealers, such as Hudson River Metal Detector and Scuba Sales in Pleasant Valley, New York; (914) 635-

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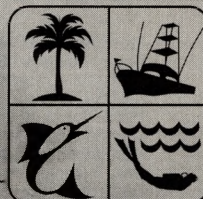
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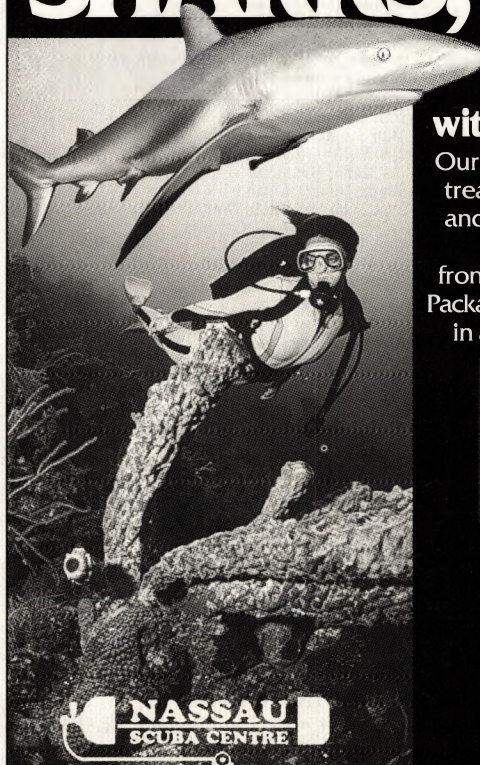
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SKIN DIVER OCTOBER 1996 **53**

MINELAB'S EXCALIBUR

3488. For the addresses and phone numbers of other dealers, call (800) 995-1936.

The Excalibur comes with a one year limited warranty on parts and labor and has a suggested retail price of \$1,250. 🐟

STUART COVE'S SHARK CIRCUS

(Continued from Page 45)

ing students to complete the academic

portion prior to arrival. The Shark Awareness course teaches basic shark identification, dispels myths and teaches facts about our ocean's ultimate predator. The course imparts the cogent logic that sharks and divers can and must coexist. Once a dive is logged with dozens of six foot Caribbean Reef Sharks milling about at Shark Runway, Shark Arena or along Shark Wall, a whole new reverence for these majestic creatures is assured.

Stuart Cove's Dive South Ocean is at the South Ocean Golf and Beach Resort—a lush 190 acre complex featuring a PGA rated 18 hole golf course, 1,500

feet of beach frontage and amenities that include 250 rooms, two swimming pools, tennis courts, exercise room, child care facility, three restaurants and several bars. The dive center features a fleet of five fiberglass V-hulled custom dive boats, a massive compressed air system with an incredible 90,000 cubic feet of cascade storage and ample classrooms, guest gear storage and retail areas.

For further information about the Start Today, Shark Awareness or any of the dive/lodging packages, contact Stuart Cove's Dive South Ocean at (800) 879-9832 or, on New Providence, (809) 362-4171 or phone/fax (809) 362-5227. 🐟

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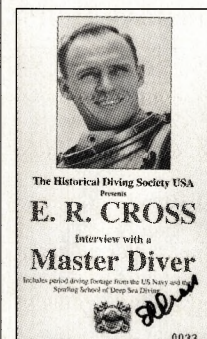
HDS PRODUCES ITS FIRST VIDEO

BY TY SAWYER

The Historical Diving Society USA has just released its first video, *E.R. Cross, Interview with a Master Diver*.

E.R. Cross is an embodiment of diving history. His reputation, renown and influence are deeply entwined in the lore and development of modern deep sea diving. His many contributions have significantly impacted both military and commercial diving; his practices and

ideas helped lay the foundations of recreational diving safety. Cross' internationally famous Technifacts column has enthralled and enlightened readers of SKIN DIVER Magazine since July 1964.



The HDS interview, taped in 1995, presents an E.R. Cross reflecting on the changes and developments he has witnessed during his 60 plus years as a professional diver. Old U.S. Navy Mark V footage, stills and memorabilia highlight the interview. Additionally, rare and lengthy black and white footage from the 1950s television show *Non-Fiction* details training at his Sparling School of Deep Sea Diving, the first of its kind in the world. The training techniques developed there are used even today.

This videotape is a must see for anyone interested in diving and its history. Few people have had as much impact in their world as E.R. Cross has had on diving.

E.R. Cross, Interview with a Master Diver is available from The Historical Diving Society, 2022 Cliff Drive, #119, Santa Barbara, California 93109. The price is \$23.95 plus \$5 for shipping and handling (California residents add sales tax). 🐟

Leap into adventure.

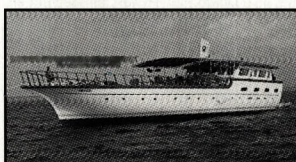
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The dolphins came to us, eager to play. They surfed on our bow wave and danced in our wake, inviting us into the water. As the boat stopped, a dozen dolphins gathered around, part of a wild pod of Atlantic Spotted Dolphins (*Stenella plagiodon*). As excited as kids at a birthday party we quickly slipped on our snorkel gear and joined them. The dolphins glided effortlessly around us, sleek and incredibly beautiful in the clear blue Bimini water. A mother escorted her curious calf as it passed each of us. Packed tightly side by side, groups of four or five young adults dived to the sand 20 feet below and spiraled back to the surface. The older adults, covered with more spots and somewhat larger than the younger individuals, moved at a more measured pace. Often they swam right up to look us in the eye, kindling an unmistakable moment of communication. It was a joyous, unforgettable encounter.

Bimini Undersea Adventures' Wild Dolphin Excursion is very different from a dolphin show in a theme park or captive dolphins escorted outside for a few hours. This is an invitation from a pod of wild Spotted Dolphins to visit with them for awhile. There are usually 12 to 20 individuals in this pod, a mix of male and female, young and old. They seem to enjoy our clumsy snorkeling as much as we enjoy

Unforgettable Wild Dolphin Excursions

Bimini Undersea Adventures

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY BILL HARRIGAN

Above: Nowdla Keefe dances with playful Spotted Dolphins (*Stenella plagiodon*); an inspiring and nearly guaranteed encounter when diving with Bimini Undersea Adventures.



Bimini Undersea Adventures' staff (L to R): Nowdla Keefe, Heather Jones, Bill Keefe, Sophia Bowleg and Melanie Philippi.



their complete mastery of the ocean. They set the terms, though, coming and going as they please. Bimini Undersea Adventures has been running the Wild Dolphin Excursion twice a week for more than six months and the dolphins have come to visit about 80 percent of the time, so the chances of a successful excursion are excellent. So far, the dolphins have stayed to play anywhere from 30 minutes to several hours.

You can float on the surface and the dolphins will come to you. Just kickback and enjoy the exhibition. If you free dive toward the bottom, though, the dolphins will follow you down as though they appreciate you joining the game. They'll circle and cavort, then escort you to the surface. It makes you realize how sleek, fast and well adapted to life in the ocean they are. If we were biplanes, they would be high performance jets. They zoom up and down, turn on a dime, then brake suddenly and ease by you slowly for a nice long look.

BIMINI UNDERSEA ADVENTURES

Bill and Nowdla Keefe have operated Bimini Undersea Adventures since 1982 and became the owners in 1987. They

Photo credit: Stephen Frink

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BIMINI UNDERSEA ADVENTURES

know Bimini inside and out and are terrific hosts. Instructors Melanie Philippi and Heather Jones take care of the in-water activities, while Sophia Bowleg minds the store. Altogether they are a great crew, which accounts, in part, for their 60 percent repeat business. Of course, the excellent diving around Bimini is the other side of the equation.

Divers quickly discover that Bimini is rich in fish. The mangroves and seagrass beds

of the shallow Grand Bahama Bank to the east of Bimini function as nursery grounds. To the west, the Gulf Stream ensures a steady supply of both larva and adults. The result is a life-sized aquarium filled with reef fish and pelagics. Whether you dive a wreck, reef or the wall, Bimini will treat you to a parade of fish. Shallow reefs such as **Kinks** and the **Strip** feature Blue Striped Grunts and Blackbar Soldierfish packed solidly side by side. Wall dives such as the **Nodules** and **Tuna Alley**, as well as wrecks such as the **Bimini Barge**, can host anything from a big Hammerhead Shark to a pair of Four-eye Butterflyfish.

Bimini Undersea Adventures operates two excellent dive boats. *Adventurer* is a 42 foot Stapleton, a spacious, stable boat with twin diesels. *Delphine* is the latest acquisition, a 32 foot Island Hopper that makes fast work of the run to the dolphin grounds. Naturally, both boats are outfitted with all the necessary safety equipment. Ten full sets of rental gear are kept on hand.

Bimini Undersea Adventures offers a super dive package, with a choice of five different hotels. The package includes three dives a day plus one dive on the day of arrival. Departure day dives are possible since Pan Am flies at only 1,500 feet but an additional fee applies. The package can be booked for any number of days. Night dives are scheduled for Tuesdays and Fridays, adding a fourth dive to the package on those days. The location of the dives is flexible, depending chiefly on the desires of the guests. Bimini Undersea Adventures lets you and your buddy be responsible for your own dive, including computer divers.

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Pan Am Air Bridge's amphibious turboprop flying boats deliver divers to North Bimini from Miami with a touch of adventure.

the amphibious turboprop flying boats is a bonus adventure. Someone from Bimini Undersea Adventures greets all dive package guests at customs, making sure guests get checked into their hotels quickly and set up for the first dive.

Timeless Bimini is a wonderful place to forget telephones, television and 24 hour news, although all the advances of satellite technology are available if you want them. The restaurants are informal and the homestyle island cooking is delicious. T-shirts and shorts, a hat and sunscreen and a light jacket in the winter are all the clothes you need to pack. U.S. and Canadian citizens can enter Bimini with a birth certificate and photo identification but a passport is recommended.

The Wild Dolphin Excursion offered by Bimini Undersea Adventures is a unique and inspiring experience—a celebration of life with a mask and snorkel. For reservations or more information, contact Bimini Undersea Adventures at (800) 348-4644.

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Red Sail Sports

Three Operations Make Diving Grand Cayman Even Easier!

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY BILL HARRIGAN

Red Sail Sports has definitely got the bases covered on Grand Cayman. The first Red Sail Sports began operations at the Hyatt eight years ago, setting the extraordinary level of personal service for which Red Sail has become known. Last year a second location opened at the Westin and now a third is operating at Rum Point. Wherever you stay on Grand Cayman, there is likely to be a Red Sail Sports close by.

RED SAIL SPORTS

Whether you are taking your first lesson or adding to your skills, Grand Cayman is a wonderful place to learn to dive and Red Sail Sports has one of the finest instructor staffs in the business. All courses from resort to divemaster are available and you can choose among PADI, NAUI, NASDS

or SSI certifications. Handicapped Scuba Association instructors are also on staff, with appropriately equipped boats and facilities. Custom videos or photography are available on any dive, as well as personal instruction and rentals.

The service and equipment at Red Sail Sports reflect the high standard of its Hyatt Regency affiliation. The rental equipment, for instance, is replaced with new gear every year. Gear lockers are provided at each location but, if you prefer, the staff will take care of your equipment from start to finish.

All Red Sail Sports boats were constructed specifically for diving. Everything—from the open transoms and freshwater showers to the marine heads and strong handrails—was designed for uncompromised convenience and safe-

Above: Strawberry Vase Sponges fuse into a hard and soft coral sculpture at Tarpion Alley. This photo: A contorted barrel sponge thrives at Hammerhead Hole.



The new 42 foot *North Wave*.



RED SAIL SPORTS DIVE BOATS

Name	Length	# Divers	Comments
<i>Reef Spirit</i>	45'	24	Roomy, stable, easy access
<i>Coral Spirit</i>	45'	24	Sistership to Reef Spirit
<i>Ocean Spirit</i>	43'	20	Smooth riding, big platform
<i>North Wave</i>	42'	20	Fast, sundeck, new design
<i>West Wave</i>	51'	24	Jet drive, open decks
<i>Sea Spirit</i>	35'	12	V-hull, available for charter
<i>Rum Point Diver</i>	38'	16	Delta design, comfortable
<i>Spirit of Ppalu</i>	65'	-	Snorkel only, Stingray City
<i>Spirit of Cayman</i>	62'	-	Snorkel only, West Bay

ty. The divemasters will assemble your equipment on a new tank between dives while you enjoy fresh fruit, ice water or lemonade. Separate rinse barrels and camera tables with safety rails are available for photographers.

Diving is not the only watersport that is great on Grand Cayman and Red Sail Sports has all the fun toys you have ever wanted to try, from waverunners to waterskis. Two state of the art sailing catamarans make snorkel trips to Stingray City and Seven Mile Beach, with a choice of lunch, dinner or sunset cruises.

HOTEL/DIVE PACKAGES

Over the last eight years Red Sail Sports has become synonymous with diving at

the luxurious Hyatt Hotel, where personal service is foremost and the surroundings are exquisite. The spacious rooms are appointed with the highest quality furnishings and each balcony offers a private view. The Regency Club, which occupies a special section of the hotel, takes the famous Hyatt service to an even higher level. Red Sail Sports offers two dive packages with the Hyatt—Scuba School and Dive Into It.

The second Red Sail Sports dive center is at the Westin, a new hotel on Seven Mile Beach that opened last December. Featuring luxurious rooms with ocean views and beachfront pools, the Westin is rapidly becoming a favorite.

In association with the Christopher Columbus Condos, Red Sail Sports offers



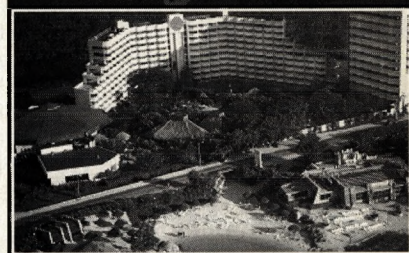
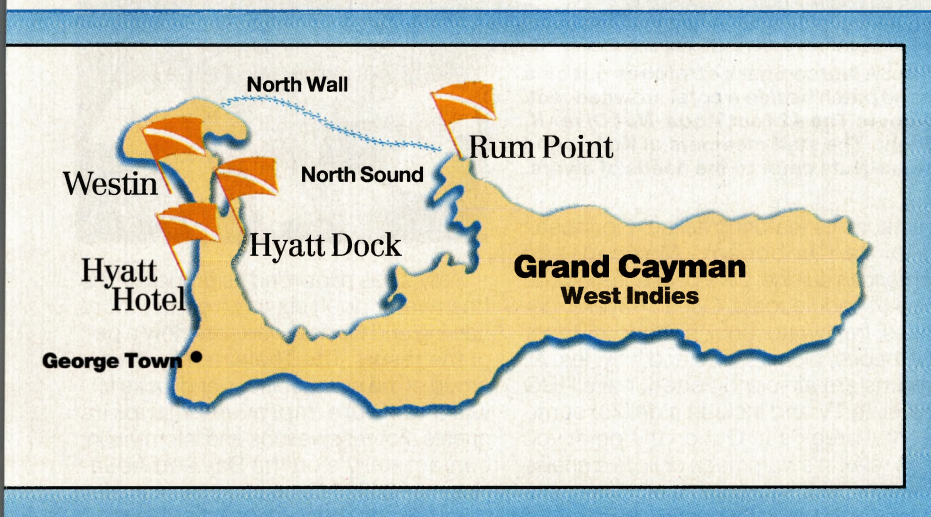
Left: Red Sail Sports' Hyatt, Westin and Rum Point operations benefit from the caliber of their staff members. Below left: Red Sail Sports' full service retail, dive and instruction center at the Hyatt Regency.



a dive package that is especially popular with families and groups. Accommodations can be selected for almost any number or combination of people. Amenities such as full kitchens make the condos a convenient choice.

Dive packages with accommodations at the Cayman Kai Resort are available from the newest Red Sail Sports dive center at Rum Point. On the northern tip of Grand Cayman, Rum Point is a quiet, private counterpoint to the bustle of Seven Mile Beach but it is also very close to spectacular North Wall and Stingray

(Continued on Page 64)



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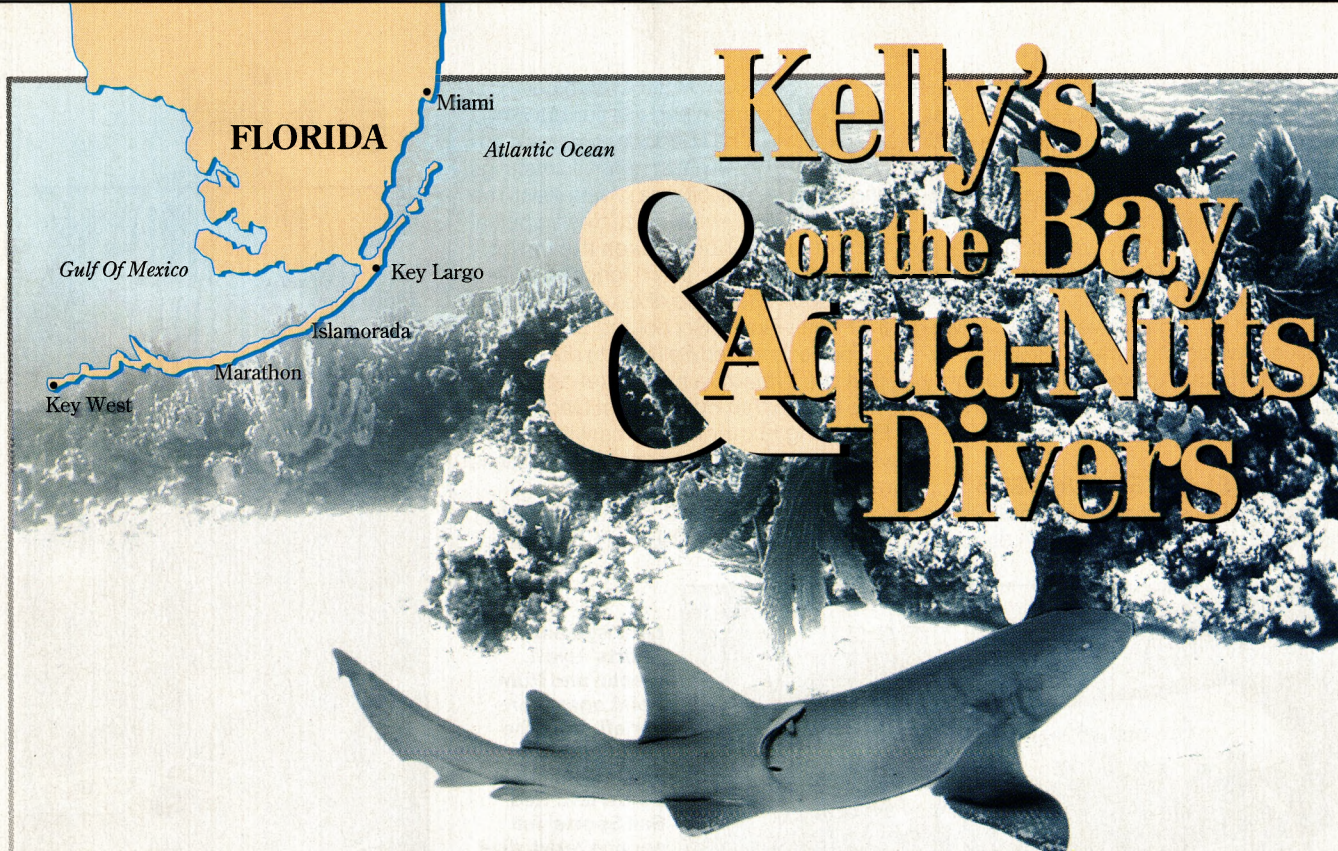
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Key Largo's Dedicated Dive Resort

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY DONNA MCLAUGHLIN

Diving at Kelly's with Aqua-Nuts is easy and fun. You don't need to carry a tank or haul your gear. Simply roll out of bed and walk a few steps to the dive boat. Divers are welcomed guests at Kelly's and are catered to in every way. If you are interested in two dives a day or five, no problem. The friendly crew will load and unload your tanks, provide sandwiches between trips and help you identify the fish you see. Whether you're a dive gorilla or snorkel enthusiast the professionals at Kelly's and Aqua-Nuts make your stay in Key Largo memorable.

Trips aboard the 42 foot *Aqua-Nuts Diver II* depart twice daily for Key Largo's National Marine Sanctuary and points south from Carysfort Reef to the Aquarius Habitat. Dive **Molasses Reef** in search of a Green Moray Eel, the **MV Benwood** at night for Spiny Lobsters and the **Duane** for schools of Great Barracuda.

The *Aqua-Nut Diver II* is built for diver comfort and convenience. The deck is wide, with gear storage below the bench in front of your tank. There is a deluxe camera station. Sturdy ladders and an open transom make for quick entry and exit. My favorite features are the freshwater showers.

A UNIQUE WATERFRONT RESORT

After arriving at Kelly's on the Bay you don't have to get back into your car until you go home. Within walking distance are



Top: A Nurse Shark stretches out on a sand patch beside a coral crowded reef. **Above:** The 42 foot *Aqua-Nut Diver II*. **Right:** The staff members of Kelly's and Aqua-Nuts cater to the needs of divers.

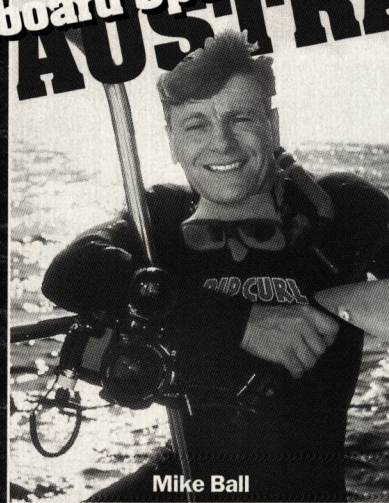


restaurants featuring Italian, Floribbean (Florida/Caribbean), Mexican and American cuisine. Dive packages include use of paddleboats, Ocean Kayaks, canoes, freshwater pool, hottubs, outdoor barbecue, picnic tables and bicycles. All rooms are air-conditioned, have HBO satellite TV and include a deluxe continental breakfast. Out on the point you can relax in a hammock or lie in a chaise lounge. Bring the whole family, there are plenty of activities for every interest.

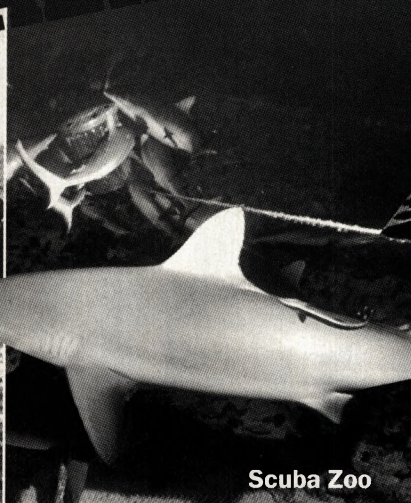
Kelly's has expanded its property. The freshwater pool, six new rooms, more parking and tropical walks are now a part of the resort. The Thaler family is very proud of the new additions and looks forward to future improvements for its guests. For reservations and information, contact Kelly's on the Bay and Aqua-Nuts at 104220 Overseas Highway, Key Largo, FL 33037; (800) 226-0415. 🐠

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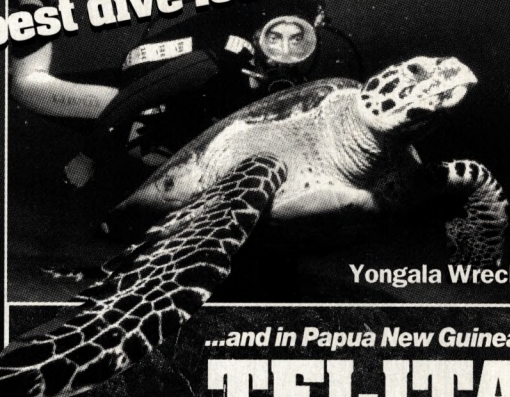
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Scuba Zoo



Yongala Wreck

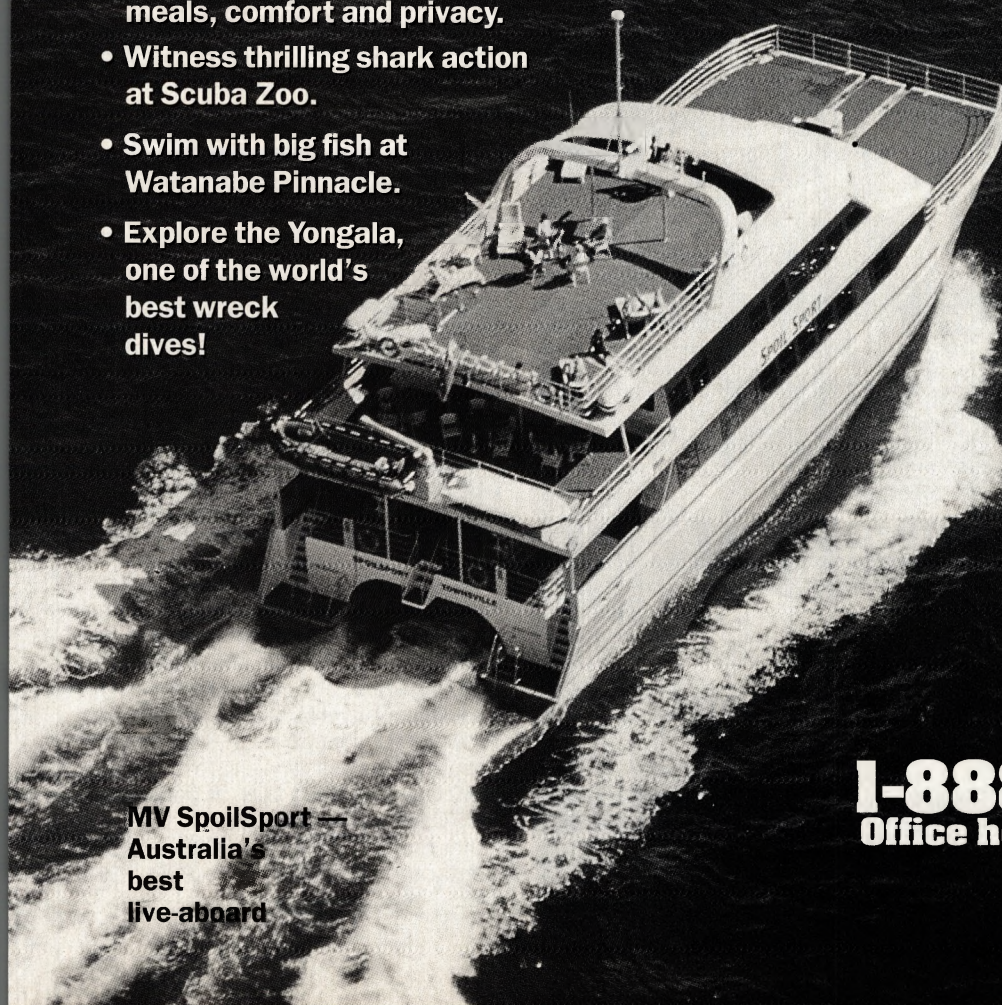
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RED SAIL SPORTS

(Continued from Page 61)

City. For divers seeking both privacy and quality in their accommodations, a few select private homes and villas are also available in dive packages with the Rum Point Red Sail Sports.

Diving with Red Sail Sports on Grand Cayman is not limited to these convenient packages. If you don't happen to be staying at the Hyatt, you can still have the quality and service of Red Sail Sports. Free transportation for dives with Red

Sail Sports will be provided from any accommodation on the island.

GRAND CAYMAN DIVING RSS STYLE

Red Sail Sports covers the entire range of Grand Cayman's north and west coasts, including **Stingray City** and **Sandbar**. All morning trips are two tank affairs. The first dive is guided in small groups, usually about six divers each. When you're not familiar with a dive site, a guide can be invaluable in helping you see the best parts of the reef or wreck. The second dive is a reg-



Red Sail Sports offers dive packages with the exquisite Hyatt Regency (above) and the luxurious new Westin Casuarina Resort (below) on Seven Mile Beach.



ular buddy dive. The maximum dive profile is 100 feet for 20 minutes for the first dive, which is typically on a deep wall such as **Orange Canyon**, **Eagle Ray Pass** or **Tarpon Alley**. Second dives are on shallower sites such as **Oro Verde**, **Aquarium Reef** or **Royal Palm Ledge**, with a maximum profile of 50 feet for 40 minutes. One tank dives are offered each afternoon and night dives are run twice a week.

TRAVEL INFORMATION

Cayman Airways flies nonstop to Grand Cayman from Miami, Tampa, Orlando, Houston and Atlanta. U.S. citizens enter with a passport, certified birth certificate or voter's registration card. A



photo ID is also needed, unless a passport is used. The electrical system is the same as in the U.S., so adapters are not necessary. Cayman dollars are the official currency, although almost every business will take U.S. dollars. Expect to receive your change in Cayman dollars, though. The exchange rate is usually \$.80 Cayman to \$1 U.S. at banks and \$.75 Cayman to \$1 at stores.

For reservations or more information, contact Red Sail Sports at (800) 255-6425.

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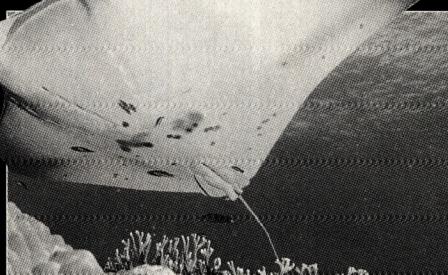
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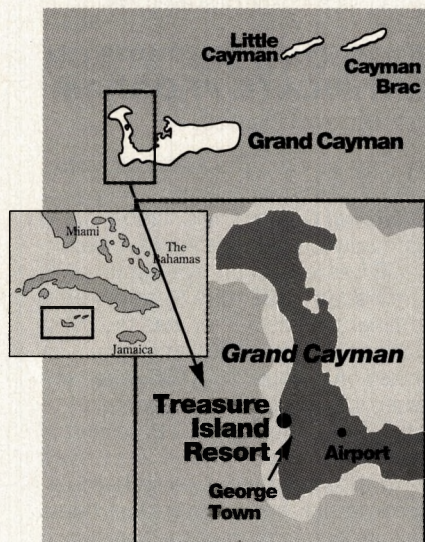
GRAND CAYMAN'S SCUBA SENSATIONS

(Continued from Page 39)

personal taste.

Peter Milburn operates a small fleet of three custom built flattop boats (*Champs I, II and III*). They cater to small groups of 8 to 14 divers per boat. Peter's newest vessel, *Champs III*, was just recently overhauled and equipped with twin 175 hp outboards that will push this vessel along at a brisk 20 knots.

Peter schedules his morning dive trips for an early 8:00 am departure so his boat captains have their choice of dive sites and can return the guests by 11:30 am. Peter's very capable dive crews (including himself) dive the West Wall,



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North Wall and South Wall—weather permitting. The dive boat crews are very knowledgeable about Grand Cayman marine life and *Champs III* is equipped with a carpeted photo/video table. All three vessels are equipped with dive ladders and platforms.

Ron and Kathie Kipp's fleet of eight dive boats cover a broad range of designs, lengths and capacities. Several boats carry 12 to 15 divers; the largest vessel, the famous *Holiday Diver* (59 feet), is limited to 20 divers. Among the better known Bob Soto's dive boats are such familiar names as *Holiday Diver*, *Cayman Diver*, *Easy Diver* and *South Wall Diver*.

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GRAND CAYMAN'S SCUBA SENSATIONS

The latest addition to the fleet is the new 39 foot *Safari Diver*—designed to carry a maximum of ten divers and cruise at a speed of 15 knots. It was built for extended range travel and three tank trips.

The Bob Soto's dive boat fleet is scheduled for 9:00 am departures, with vessels leaving from both Seven Mile Beach and Governor's Harbour/North Sound. They offer daily trips to dive sites along the West Wall, North Wall and South Wall. Trips to Grand Cayman's East End are three tank dives, conducted three days weekly.

The Bob Soto's staff is exceptionally friendly and service oriented. The boats are roomy and equipped with freshwater showers. Each vessel is stocked with such customer amenities as an ice chest, drinking water, lemonade and candy (after the dive). All boats are equipped with shaded areas, as well as suntan lounging locations. Dive boat departures are prompt and transportation is provided from and to the dive boat departure points.

Bob Soto's Diving offers an amazing selection of 34 different experiences that include morning dives, afternoon dives, night dives, one tank and two tank dives. The eight different dive vessels pretty much cover all of Grand Cayman's best sites—north, south, east or west.

The company's newest dive experience is a three tank trip to the East End aboard the *Safari Diver*. Scheduled for every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, the vessel departs Governor's Harbour at 8:30 am. It cruises to the Far North Wall at the eastern end of Grand Cayman, where the first dive is done at such sites as **Babylon, Julie's Delight, Susan's Holiday, Black Rock, Cinderella's Castle or Allen's Alley**. This region is world renowned for exceptionally good visibility and the opportunity to encounter Eagle Rays, turtles, schools of Midnight Parrotfish, sharks and unusual pelagics.

Dive number two aboard the *Safari Diver* is conducted (after a one hour surface interval) on the lesser visited region of Grand Cayman's North Wall, where Eagle Rays abound and visibility can exceed 120 feet. Dive number three is a shallow reef excursion near Rum Point or the Main Channel on the North Wall. It is here divers encounter a wide variety of reef fish in a beautiful coral setting. All dives are computer assisted, staying well within the safe margin of no decompression dive limits. Reservations are a must if you don't want to miss this adventure.

Scuba Sensations is a full service dive center that offers equipment sales of such top quality brands as Forte, Sea Quest and Dacor dive gear. It operates a

full video facility with an underwater video pro on staff. The shop is open from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm, seven days a week. All major credit cards are accepted or purchases can be charged to Treasure Island guests' room bill.

Scuba Sensations and Treasure Island Resort have come up with a large selection of economical dive vacation packages for three, four, five, six or seven night stays. As of our publication deadline, we understand that winter air-land-dive packages (normally high season) are available starting as low as \$549 per person. By calling the toll free number you can discuss and book the entire vacation package, including accommodations, diving, airline transportation, car rental and whatever else you need for making your Grand Cayman vacation the best ever!

BERMUDA'S SHIPWRECK CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

(Continued from Page 29)

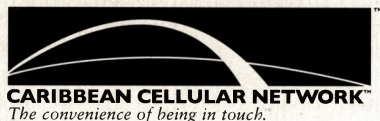
Benchley's book, *The Deep* and later, the movie of the same name.

Cristobal Colon: The *Cristobal Colon* is Bermuda's largest shipwreck, measuring 499 feet long and three decks high. Launched in 1923, this Spanish built transatlantic luxury liner was the most advanced design of her time. She was wrecked on October 25, 1936, when she crashed into a coral reef at a speed of 15 knots. Today she lies in 20 to 55 feet of water with her wreckage scattered across 100,000 square feet of seafloor. Gigantic in size, she offers endless hours of fascinating exploration—examining boilers, steam turbines, propellers, drive shafts and hundreds of ship parts.

Hermes: The *Hermes* is considered Bermuda's most popular wreck dive because she is fully intact, sits upright on the bottom and lies in crystal clear water. She is the perfect picture of a classic shipwreck. Originally designed as a buoy tender, this 165 foot steel hulled vessel was constructed in Pennsylvania during World War II. Long after her military service was over the ship arrived in Bermuda as a Panamanian registered freighter with engine trouble. She was abandoned by her crew because repairs were estimated to cost more than the ship was worth. In 1984 the derelict became an artificial reef one mile off the south shore. She sits on a flat sand bottom in 80 feet of water with her mast pointing toward the surface. Visiting divers can explore her cargo hold, galley and wheelhouse or examine her deck winch, cargo boom, mast or other fixtures.

Mary Celestia: One of Bermuda's most mysterious shipwrecks is the *Mary Celestia*—a Confederate blockade runner with multiple identities. In an effort to confuse and evade monitoring by Union

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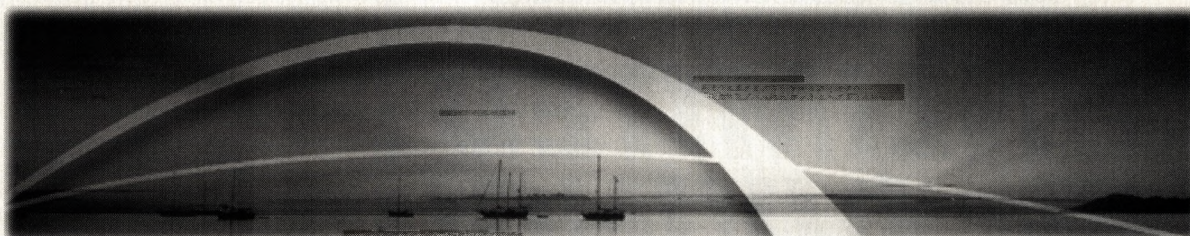


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BERMUDA'S SHIPWRECK CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

spies, this crafty ship operated under a variety of names—*Marie Celeste*, *Mary Celeste* and the *Bijou*. Designed as a high speed side paddlewheel steamer, she was built in England and chartered to the South during America's Civil War. She smuggled much needed guns, ammunition and food into Charleston Harbor. The sleek, 225 foot ship sank in 1864 after hitting a reef close to Bermuda's south shore. The wreck lies in

55 feet of water with one of her paddlewheel frames standing upright like a miniature ferris wheel. The other paddlewheel lies flat on the sand, along with other interesting artifacts such as the boilers, anchor and part of the bow.

Minnie Breslau: The *Minnie Breslau* is one of the unluckiest ships to sink in Bermuda waters. This 300 foot steel hulled English steamer was on her maiden voyage between Portugal and New York with a cargo of wine, dried fruit and bales of cork when she sank in 1872. Unfamiliar with Bermuda's reefs, the captain edged his new ship toward

the shore, where she collided with a submerged reef and ground to a halt. An attempt to back the ship off the reef only resulted in it sinking. The wreck is one mile off the south shore in depths ranging from 25 to 70 feet. Still visible are the ship's huge steam boiler, parts of the wheelhouse, the ship's steering quadrant, a four bladed propeller and her rudder.

Pelinaion: Bermuda's best East End shipwreck is the *Pelinaion*—a 385 foot steel hulled cargo steamer. Built in Port Glasgow in 1907, her ownership changed numerous times before she was purchased in 1939 by a Greek shipping company and given her present name. The *Pelinaion* was heading from West Africa to Baltimore with a cargo of iron ore when she struck the reef off David's Head in 1940. The wreck lies one mile offshore at depths ranging from 20 to 70 feet. She is an awesome sight because of her large size and massive components. Most noticeable is the ship's steam boiler, huge triple expansion engine standing upright and a spare propeller lying on her collapsed deck.

DIVE OPERATORS

Bermuda has five professional scuba operators with six dive centers, strategically situated at various locations around the island. All of them operate custom dive boats, run daily trips and are staffed by certified scuba instructors, boat captains and divemasters.

BLUE WATER DIVERS: On the West Shore at Robinson's Marina, Blue Water Divers is Bermuda's longest established dive operation. Operating the 42 foot *Meridian*, it offers daily dive trips to any of 22 wreck sites—mostly on the island's west, south and north sides.

FANTASEA DIVING: At Darrell's Wharf in Hamilton Harbour, Fantasea Diving is a PADI Five Star Dive Center with convenient access to Bermuda's north side. From this location it operates the 35 foot *Bottom Time* and dives at least 20 wrecks along the western, northern and eastern reefs.

NAUTILUS DIVING: With two dive centers on the north and south sides, Nautilus Diving Ltd. offers easy access to just about all of Bermuda's wreck sites. The Southampton operation at the Southampton Princess Hotel is within easy reach of 15 south shore wreck sites via the 40 foot *Cracklin Rosie* dive boat. The north side operation at the Hamilton Princess Hotel in Hamilton Harbour is home base for the 40 foot *Cante Libra*, with direct access to 15 wreck sites along the northern, western and eastern reefs.

SCUBA LOOK: At Grotto Bay Beach Hotel on the island's historic east end, Scuba Look is Bermuda's newest dive



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SOUTH SIDE SCUBA: On the beach at the Sonesta Beach Hotel, South Side Scuba offers quick and easy access to all south side wrecks and reefs, as well as many more on the western and north-western reefs. It operates the 40 foot diesel powered *UB 40*, as well as a high speed hard hulled inflatable.

For information about where to stay in Bermuda you can call any of the five dive operators and they will provide you with information as to the hotel accommodations that are most convenient and meet your budget requirements.

GETTING THERE

Getting to Bermuda is comparatively easy as the island is served by daily jet flights by American Airlines, Continental, Delta, Kiwi and U.S. Air. Bermuda is 550 miles off the coast of South Carolina, almost on the same longitude as the Virgin Islands. It is the northernmost coral reef system in the Atlantic. Some of the best diving can be experienced during of September, October and part of November, when the water is still warm and the visibility ranges from 100 to 120 feet.

For more information on the Bermuda Shipwreck Certificate program, where to stay or reservations for diving, contact any of Bermuda's five dive operators or call the Bermuda Department of Tourism at (800) 821-1199. 🐟

Dive Notes

ADOPT MIKE BALL'S PEACE ON REEF:

Reef aware and conservation minded divers have welcomed the introduction of the new Peace on Reef (Look Don't Touch) signal by Mike Ball Dive Expeditions. Mike Ball is now encouraging other dive operators to adopt the Peace on Reef concept.

The new signal to use when observing someone damaging marine life consists of a "V" sign or "Victory" sign. This acts as a reminder to be aware of buoyancy control and dangling hoses.

Diver response since the introduction of the Peace on Reef signal has been overwhelming. If adopted across the entire dive industry, it cannot help but have a positive effect on the conservation of the delicate marine environments that we visit. For more information, call Mike Ball Dive Expeditions at (077) 723-022 or fax (077) 212-152. 🐟



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SKIN DIVER OCTOBER 1996 69

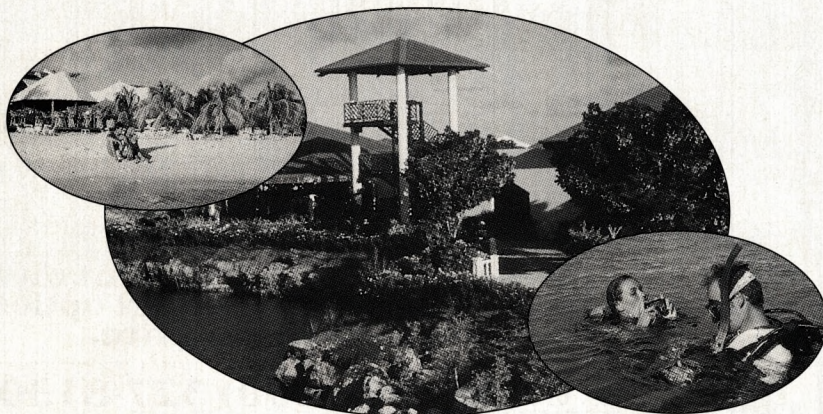
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Dive Notes

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The National Association of Underwater Instructors—NAUI Worldwide—has appointed Klaus D. Mähser as its National Sales Representative for Mexico.

Mähser, a resident of Cancun, Mexico, is the organizer and co-owner of the international dive show, Mundo Azul, held in Mexico City, and has headed the hotel sales program for Marina Aqua World of Cancun. He holds numerous aquatic certifications with NAUI and other agencies, including prestigious Instructor Trainer and Course Director designations.

Mähser may be reached in Cancun at 011 (98) 84 26 40; fax 011 (98) 84 26 40.

NAUI Worldwide has a large number of affiliated dive centers and certified member instructors in Mexico. The organization is the world's oldest non-profit membership training agency created solely to support and promote dive safety. For further information on NAUI programs, visit the NAUI Internet Web Site at <http://www.naui.org/> or call (909) 621-5801. 🐠

PADI'S UPDATED RESCUE DIVER

MANUAL: PADI's Rescue Diver course is one of the most popular specialties it offers. This has led PADI Worldwide to introduce a revised version of the *Rescue Diver Manual*. Featuring a new cover, new photography and an updated look, the manual is a tool to take divers through each phase of the Rescue Diver course, which has not changed. Students can use the manual along with the *Rescue Diver* video to learn and master rescue techniques and skills.

The updated PADI *Rescue Diver Manual* is available exclusively through PADI Dive Centers and Resorts. For a free PADI worldwide directory, call (800) 729-7234 or write PADI Directory, 1251 E. Dyer Road #100, Santa Ana, CA 92705-5605. Additional information is also available by visiting PADI's Web Site at <http://www.padi.com>. 🐠

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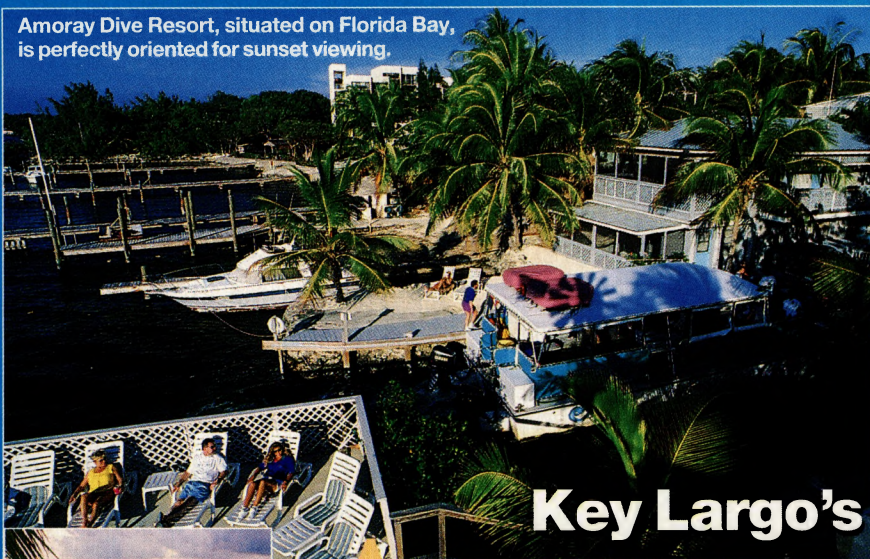


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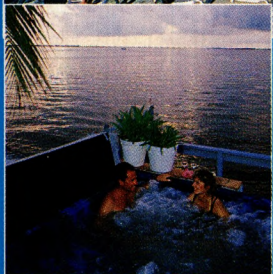
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TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY
BY BILL HARRIGAN



Amy Slate, the "underwater vicar," performs about 100 U/W weddings a year.

full kitchens. The apartments facing the water also feature porches with hammocks.

AMORAY DIVING

The Amoray Dive Center is a designated PADI International Dive Resort, offering both NAUI and PADI scuba courses from resort to dive-master, as well as all warm water specialty courses. Instruction under the British Sub-Aqua Club banner is also available, including an instructor crossover course scheduled for the first week in September. A nitrox certification course is also offered. A small but talented staff is responsible for the array of choices available at Amoray Dive Center. In addition to their USCG Captain qualifications, Keith Weston and

Molasses Reef overflows with Spotfin Butterflyfish, Bluehead and Creole Wrasse, Blue Chromis, Damselfish and more.

Mike Brooks are also PADI and NAUI instructors. Amy Slate, Mike O'Byrn, Joe Symborsky, Cindy Quelch and Ann Marshall are all PADI instructors and Debby Torgler is a PADI divemaster. Both Mikes and Amy take care of the BSAC instruction, while Ann, Debby and Cindy manage the office and reservations.

Amoray Dive Center has a complete line of Sherwood rental equipment, replaced annually to ensure it's in the best possible condition. Dive equipment is also for sale in the dive store, along with a large selection of gifts and T-shirts.

Amoray Diver is a 45 foot Corinthian catamaran powered by a pair of 250 hp outboards. Although the boat is certified for 49 divers, Amoray Dive Resort self-imposes a limit of 30 divers to prevent crowding. Stability, speed and comfort are the hallmarks of this boat. Tanks and weights are all loaded aboard by the staff and divers can choose either 63 or 80 cubic foot aluminum tanks.

DIVE SITES

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Several wrecks are available to Amoray Dive Resort guests. The **Benwood** is an excellent first wreck dive. The dive profile is 30 to 45 feet and the hull attracts huge numbers of fish.

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Amoray Dive Resort is especially popular with families and groups. The combination of lodging and diving is appealing, plus the bayside location offers many opportunities for ecological tours and sunset cruises. For more information and reservations, call (800) 4-A-MORAY or write to Amoray Dive Resort, 104250 Overseas Highway, Key Largo, Florida 33037. You can also fax your request to (305) 453-9516. Check out the Amoray Dive Resort Web Site at amoray@pennekamp.com or e-mail to amoray@pop.bridge.net.

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Dive Notes

NEW BERMUDA UNDERWATER EXPLORATION INSTITUTE: The Bermuda Underwater Exploration Institute will open next spring. The 40,000 square foot marine institute, currently being constructed within walking distance of downtown Hamilton, will focus on historic and scientific exploration and discovery in the waters off Bermuda.

The highlight of this sophisticated multimedia facility will be an eight minute attraction that simulates a deep ocean dive to 12,000 feet.

The Institute's waterfront site on Bermuda's Hamilton Harbor houses a 145 seat auditorium, 10,000 square foot exhibition hall and a full service restaurant with scenic outdoor seating.

Also on display will be many of the actual submersible devices, including ROVs (Remotely Operated Vehicles), submersible robots and an early 1900s hard hat suit.

An exhibit on marine archaeology will focus on several of approximately 300 wrecks that lie in Bermuda's waters and

presents the efforts of amateur and marine archaeologists to recover and preserve objects.

For more information, write to Bermuda Underwater Exploration Institute, P.O. Box HM 1745, Hamilton HM GX, Bermuda or call Nancy Brennan, Executive Director at (011) 441 297-7219.

STAR DIVE '96—ADVENTURE AT COCOS ISLAND:

Support The Starlight Foundation of New York by joining adventurous scuba divers October 14 to 25 on a trip to legendary Cocos Island off the coast of Costa Rica. Divers will fly to San Jose, CR, where they will spend two days. Then, a bus will take them across the country (only four hours) to the port town of Puntarenas, where they'll board the luxury live-aboard dive vessel, *Sea Hunter*. For the next day and a half, *Sea Hunter* motors to Cocos Island where guests will spend nine days diving with schools of Hammerheads, whales, dolphins, turtles and other diverse marine life. Kayaking, snorkeling and hiking to mystical waterfalls are also included.

StarDive '96 will benefit The Starlight Foundation of New York, which helps children with a terminal disease realize a last wish.

For reservations or more information, write to David Leonard at 306 E. 91st Street, New York, NY 10128 or call (212)

289-0087, fax (212) 860-5384 or e-mail dsl@bway.net.

NEW PADI VIDEO—ADVENTURES IN DIVING: PADI's newest video, *Adventures in Diving*, uses underwater images to show the many opportunities available to certified scuba divers.

Specialty dives such as night and deep diving are among the most requested at dive centers around the world. *Adventures in Diving* provides an introduction to these popular dives and also has sections on underwater navigation, peak performance buoyancy, underwater photography and other interesting specialties.

The 60 minute video contains underwater footage shot in popular dive locations around the world, including Grand Cayman, Santa Catalina Island, Bermuda and the South Pacific. Diving skills, techniques and helpful hints provide viewers with a closer look at PADI specialty courses. Additionally, an "equipment primer" features tips for divers looking to purchase dive gear.

Adventures in Diving and its companion manual are available exclusively from PADI Dive Centers and Resorts. For a free PADI Directory, call (800) 729-7234, ext. 565 or write to PADI Directory, 1251 E. Dyer Road #100, Santa Ana, CA 92705-5605.

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C U R A Ç A O
THE BREAKAWAY FROM THE EVERYDAY



Thirty-five years in diving hasn't left us wet behind the ears.

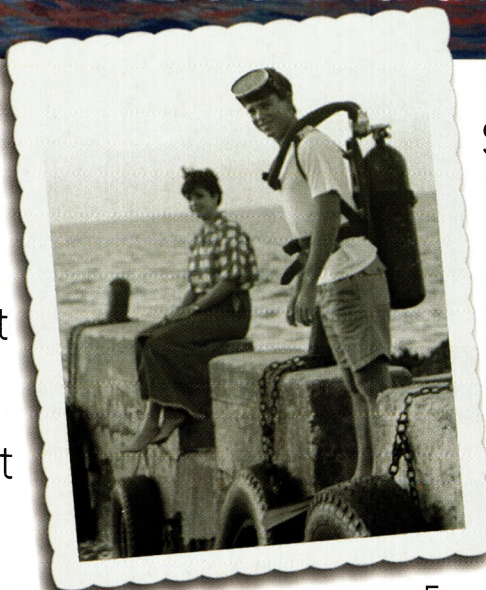
In 1958 Mrs. Hebe Connors added eight rooms to her cottage accommodating a handful of divers at what later became known as Sunset House.

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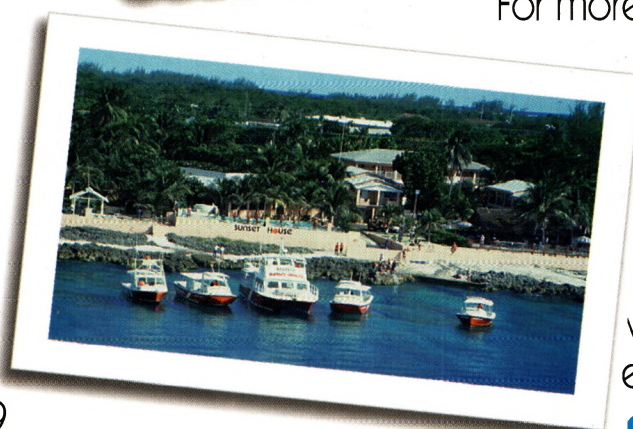
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7111 or toll-free from the US on 1-800 854 4767. Or write Sunset House, PO Box 479, Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands, BWI and see what a difference a little experience makes.



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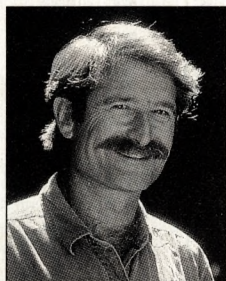
**Guiding You
to the Best
in Fiji**

PHOTO/JOEL SIMON

Snorkeler's Perspective

The Advantages of a Snorkeling Guide

BY JOEL SIMON



Touch, taste, smell, sight and hearing. These five senses combined give rise to a sixth, perhaps the most vital sense of all, the sense of discovery. For many, snorkeling embodies this sixth sense, giving us the means to discover the beauty of the underwater world.

We are privileged. Today we have choices on how best to develop our snorkeling skills and explore shallow water ecosystems. Not so long ago the only way to learn to snorkel was to put on a mask and fins, take the plunge and hope for the best. Recently, however, we have seen a new layer of sophistication with the emergence of guided snorkeling programs. There are advantages to both alternatives. The question is: independent or guided, which method is best for you?

I have been designing and leading educational snorkeling programs since 1980. Of the literally thousands of past participants the most universal quality is the desire to learn about the marine environment through personal experience.

We are fortunate to have excellent interpretive facilities at our disposal. Magnificent aquariums put us face to face with gracefully gliding turtles, giant green eels, multicolored fish and bizarre invertebrates. Television documentaries, books and magazine articles reveal intriguing behaviors or highlight creatures most of us never personally witness. These are valuable educational tools, yet they are no substitute for personal experience.

For me there are few sounds more pleasurable than the "ooohhs," "aaahhs" and squeals of delight that issue forth from people discovering the marine environment for themselves. But, to achieve this level of observation, snorkelers must have some idea of what to look for and be comfortable and confident in the water.

Mastering the requisite skills is far easier for some than others. The first element of guided

snorkeling is basic instruction in snorkeling techniques. I am told repeatedly that the activity is so simple, no one needs to be "taught" how to snorkel. Experience proves otherwise. All too often, I am faced with students who have had unfortunate first encounters.

Historically, a typical example is the cruise ship scenario—passengers are presented with a deck full of miscellaneous gear, told to grab what they need, be back by lunch and have a great time with the fish. Instead of joyous "ooohhs" and "aaahhs," the surface resonates with the sounds of people choking. This leaves would be enthusiasts with an intimidation that's hard to overcome.

Other program members approach me, usually away from the group, reaffirming a sincere desire to snorkel but admitting to marginal swimming skill or doubting their ability to float. Some have had leg cramps, were inadvertently swept away by currents or had a life-long fear of the water. These are all overcome or avoided altogether through instruction and training.

Learning to snorkel is rarely seen as an end in itself. Rather, the skills are just tools, used to access one of nature's most marvelous realms. Think of guided snorkeling as an unveiling, through various instructional methods, of some of the secrets marine biology can share with us. Through simple presentations and on-site tips, you will learn how to identify fish, what to look for and how to compare behavioral characteristics. Your guide will outline reef structure, explain coral types and illustrate animal relationships. All of these can help focus a snorkeler's attention, giving observations more meaning, understanding and context.

Through discoveries made while snorkeling, I've been motivated to learn more about the marine environment. Experience has been my best teacher, as it may also be for you.

Whether you learn better on your own or in a more structured environment is a question only you can answer. But at least you have the choice. Either way, the ocean remains one of the best arenas for exercising our sense of discovery. 

Inside Snorkeling Tourbook

Brought to you by:

Joel Simon, **Editor**

Tamara Collins, **Executive Editor**

Susan Grube, **Art Director**

Stephen Frink, **Contributing Editor**

Snorkeler's Gearbag



*It's in the Bag:
A Place to Stow
Your Gear*

The Resourceful Snorkeler



*Snorkeling
Guidebooks:
Know Before
You Go*

Life on a Shallow Reef



*Diurnal and
Nocturnal Fish:
The Reef's 24
Hour Cycle*

Bon Voyage



*A Snorkel Tour:
Guiding You to
the Best in Fiji*

Snorkeler's Gearbag



It's in the Bag: A Place to Stow Your Gear

BY TAMARA COLLINS
PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRANDI CENTENO

A little preparation and organization can add a whole new mode of ease and confidence to your snorkeling adventures. When a beautiful day tempts you into the water, can you sling a packed snorkeling bag over your shoulder and go or must you resort to a hectic search for a missing mask, snorkel or fins? Walking to the beach or boat, do you stroll in confidence with your gear tucked away or are your arms full of ungainly gear? A snorkeling bag is just the thing to help you keep it all together.

Snorkeling bags have a dual purpose. Primarily, they provide the best method for carrying all your odds and ends to the beach or boat. But they are also convenient for storage during the rainy months or in between vacations, keeping your gear free of dust and in tip top shape. When the time is right, it's already packed—just grab it and go explore.

You may have been disappointed to find so many big, bulky bags designed for scuba gear in dive stores. These large dive bags are overkill for the average snorkeler but, luckily, there are some dive manufacturers that cater to your needs. Their medium sized, washable bags are

made of fast drying mesh or nylon and drain easily. They are big enough to carry a beach towel, snorkel, mask, fins and accessories but



IN BRIEF

Dacor Deluxe Sport Bag

Material: 420 denier, nylon bottom; nylon mesh top
Features: Gusseted bottom, plastic zippered pocket, drawstring top, adjustable shoulder strap
Size: 12 by 27 by 6 inches
Colors: Neon yellow and black
Price: \$10.50
Phone: (847) 446-9555



conveniently sized for storage or traveling. They all have shoulder straps or handles and most have extra pockets to help with organization. They come in a variety of colors, con-

IN BRIEF

Sea Quest Mesh Snorkeling Bag

Material: Nylon mesh
Features: Nylon webbing shoulder strap, drawstring closure
Size: 18 by 30 inches
Colors: Black
Price: \$16
Phone: (619) 438-1101



IN BRIEF

Scubapro Beach Sac Gear Tote and Fin Trekker Bag

Beach Sac

Material: Polyester/polypropylene/nylon mesh
Features: Braided nylon rope shoulder strap doubles as a drawstring to close the bag at the top
Size: 25 by 12 inches
Colors: Black with yellow accents
Price: \$8.50

Fin Trekker

Material: Nylon
Features: Large, tapered fin compartment with zipper; mesh at bottom and top for drainage. Separate zippered mask or accessory pocket with mesh and grommet for drainage. Adjustable, nylon webbing quick-release shoulder strap and handle.
Size: 27 inches long; 11 inches at its widest
Colors: Blue with yellow accents
Price: \$31.50
Phone: (800) GO-SCUBA

Three snorkeling bags from top dive equipment manufacturers are pictured on this page and described in the sidebars. Call the manufacturer for the name and address of an equipment dealer in your area.



Diurnal and Nocturnal Fish: The Reef's 24 Hour Cycle

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY BILL GLEASON

The world of fish is neatly divided into two shifts—day and night. While it may not be obvious to new snorkelers, a little observation will reveal whether a fish is active during the day (diurnal) or at night (nocturnal). Knowing which families of fish are diurnal or nocturnal relates a lot about a fish—where it hides, its territories, its food sources and place in the food chain.

The majority of diurnal fish are normally found browsing or cruising the reefs in search of food—an ongoing activity for all fish during their active hours. The damselfish, surgeonfish and parrotfish families forage for algae in predetermined territories on the reef. In the case of parrotfish and surgeonfish, the territory is fairly large and, in damselfish, relatively small (protecting their territory, or algae farms, is what causes their aggressive behavior toward other fish and snorkelers). Angelfish and butterflyfish, on the other hand, feed on sponges and a variety of other forms of life found on sponges and within crevices of the coral reef. Pelagic fish, or those that are not territorial but merely visit the reef during the day, such as jacks, feed voraciously on smaller fish and some invertebrates. Still others, such as the Trumpetfish, rely on camouflage to sneak up on their unsuspecting prey, other reef fish.

The hierarchy of the coral reef is well established and each fish quickly learns what territory it may forage for food in and what areas of the reef to avoid. Fish have very keen eyesight and, in particular, have the ability to distinguish color. They can easily identify other fish and take appropriate action (either



*Top: Smallmouth Grunts (*Haemulon chrysargyreum*) are inactive during the day—they feed and hunt as individuals at night. Above: Four-eye Butterflyfish (*Chaetodon capistratus*) are some of the most active daytime feeders.*

fight or flight) based on coloration.

At night a profound change comes over the coral reef—the day shift retreats to the protection of the reef and most enter a state of reduced activity (scientists call this torpor), which allows them to conserve energy. Meanwhile, the night shift, which has been either dormant (in the case of schooling fish such as grunts and snappers) or hidden (such

as those in the squirrelfish family), takes over the reef. At night, most of the fish feed on invertebrates, which also leave their hiding places and search for food. So, although it is dark on the coral reef, the amount of activity is pretty astounding.

When you see schools of grunts and snappers during the day, for example, they are always huddled together, barely moving and don't react much except to retreat beneath reef overhangs when approached. As soon as it is dusk, the schools disperse and the individual fish search for food until the following morning. The large, overdeveloped eyes of some nocturnal fish can detect motion in very low light conditions, helping them to feed. One look at the big eyes of the squirrelfish tells you it is designed by nature for night hunting.

So, the next time you are snorkeling, take a closer look at all those fish down there. If they are motionless or hidden, chances are they are nocturnal fish. Ditto for dark red and very pale fish. If they are brightly colored and actively foraging for food, watch them carefully to see just where their territories begin and end and how they interact with other fish. There's a lot to observe and day snorkeling is the perfect place to begin. As you get better, you'll want to get an underwater light and go night snorkeling to see the reef in its night phase. It's pretty colorful and wild.

For experienced snorkelers, try snorkeling at dusk and dawn. You'll see both shifts going to and from work and will usually see some mating behavior (about 80 percent of fish reproduce at dusk) as well. Enjoy. 🐟

The Resourceful Snorkeler



Snorkeling Guidebooks: Know Before You Go

BY TY SAWYER

PHOTOGRAPHY BY BONNIE J. CARDONE

The world is filled with exciting snorkeling; mind boggling shallow underwater diversity can be found in nearly every corner of the globe, near and far, in cold water and warm. Experiences can vary from a close encounter with a huge Whale Shark to a jellyfish filled inland lake to seeing the slightest macro creature secreted away within the reef.

How does one find these extraordinary sites and creatures? Will the water be cold or warm? Are there waves and current to contend with? Are the available accommodations luxurious or monastic? Is the nightlife lively or is sunset the highlight of the evening? There are many questions to consider before deciding on a snorkeling destination and accidental tourists are usually disappointed. Informed snorkeling travelers, however, arrive at a destination well armed with knowledge and ready for the next step: experience. For a good start on your snorkeling holiday, guidebooks can make all the difference in the world.

For snorkelers, guidebooks can highlight information on destination, marine life, snorkeling conditions and skill level. If you are searching for a specific experience, books can be invaluable in helping you find that perfect place. Or, if you want something exciting and new, a guidebook can enlighten, teach and steer you toward your exotic adventure. Conversely, with a little research you may find that what you thought was the perfect destination is actually beyond your means or skills, or doesn't have that element you feel is essential. With the assistance of a good guidebook you can embark on your adventure prepared and ready for new worlds of experience, assured



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that you have made the best possible decision.

Guidebooks can only take one so far, though. The feel and texture of a Cushion Sea Star, the quick change artistry of an octopus or the warmth and pressure of the embracing blue waters cannot be learned or adequately described in books. Also, guidebooks can sometimes make the reader feel as if the many magnificent and strange creatures on its pages will magically appear when one enters the water. The truth of it is you have to search, sometimes long and hard, because many marine animals are usually fairly elusive and skittish. To them you are just another predator. Even if the guidebooks tell you to look in specific terrain, it is still difficult to find some creatures. I have stared at a well cam-

ouflaged octopus, pointed out to me by a sharp-eyed guide, and still not been able to "see" it until it moved. The most effective way to supplement your knowledge is with a guide.

Your guidebooks can help here, too. Research the guides and guided tours to match them with your expectations. You wouldn't want to finally arrive at your destination only to find out your dive guide doesn't speak your language or doesn't have the experience you were expecting.

One of my first guided snorkeling adventures was with a noted marine biologist in Martinique. I had read up on the local, shallow water flora and fauna and thought I knew, as an experienced diver, what

I would find when I dipped my mask into the water and how to find it. I didn't. The guidance of the books could not match the experience of the guide.

With the guide, the beauty of the reef and its creatures came alive and my appreciation soared. My subsequent enjoyment of the reef was magnified by my new awareness and I discovered more among its folds than I ever had before on my own. It is one of my favorite memories. I can now pour through my books and be reminded of my encounters with a variety of creatures pictured between its covers.

For savvy travelers, the journey begins with books and ends with experience. Do your homework, know what you want to see, appraise your skills honestly, slip in the water and enjoy.

A list of snorkeling book distributors and publishers is provided in the accompanying sidebar for your convenience.



A Snorkel Tour: Guiding You to the Best in Fiji

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOEL SIMON

When I first landed in Fiji, it opened its arms wide in an embrace of friendship; hospitality has grown stronger with every visit. In 1985, I had just finished an assignment teaching snorkeling and marine biology on a cruise that concluded at Suva, Fiji's capital port. On the dock, I watched a local young man loading lumber onto a road-worn pick-up truck. "Bula" he said with a smile, "My name is Tui." Soon I was helping with the wood. As we completed the task, he politely asked me where I was going. "Nowhere special, it's my first time in Fiji. I just want to see the country," I replied. "Well then, why not come along with me? If you like, you can help unload the lumber."

Three days, three ferries, five trucks and four islands later, we arrived at his little village

of Dreketi on the island of Qamea. There I stayed, living in his parent's house, for almost one month. While we transformed the lumber into a stout little boat, I participated in daily life.

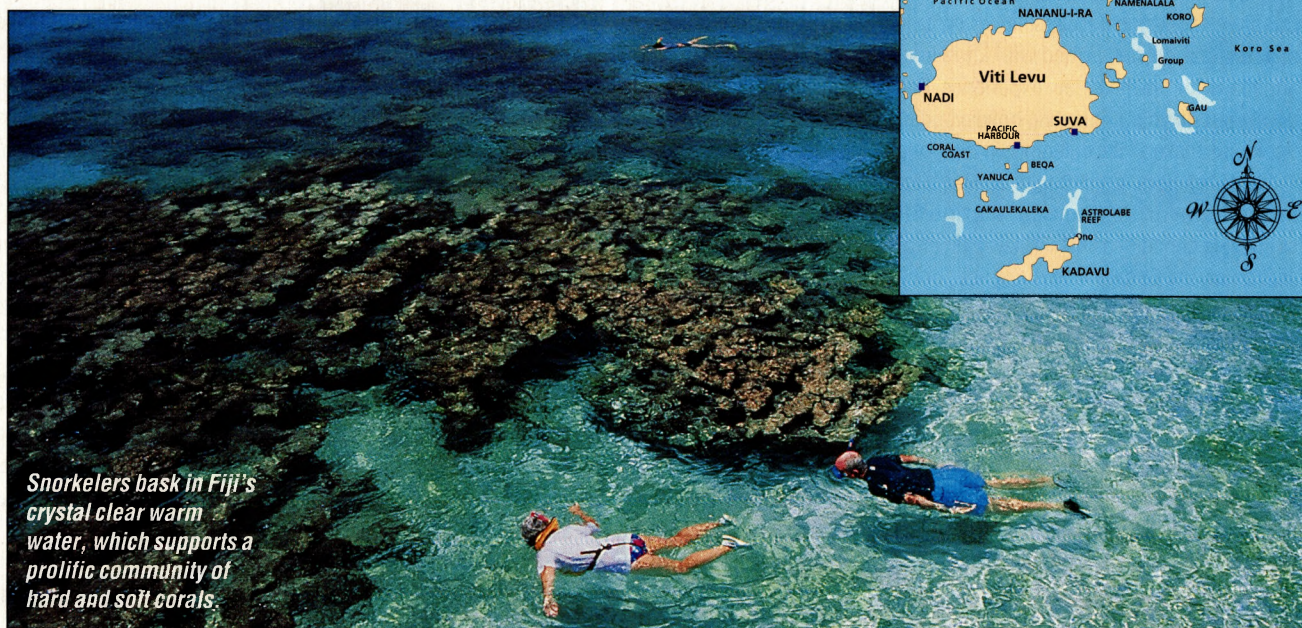
Each afternoon the men would gather with tiny, hand-carved wooden goggles and snorkel the shallow reef, spearing fish for dinner. To these villagers, the reef was an integral part of their lifestyle and the fish an essential component of their diet. To me, the reef was a stunning example of South Pacific marine ecology.

Since then, I've been back to Fiji nearly every year, leading educational snorkeling programs to study the marine biology. Each time I am captivated by the luxuriant reefs and the warmth and hospitality of the Fijian people.

Fiji is comprised of approximately 330 islands, of which about 100 are permanently in-

habited. Commonly divided into four main groups, collectively they spread out over 250,000 square miles of ocean. The group sits between 15 and 22 degrees south latitude, a location that provides a tropical climate both above and below the waterline. Weather conditions are best described as seasonal trends. Also, because the islands vary so much in location and size, a range of climates may exist simultaneously. The leeward, or western, sides of the larger islands tend to be drier and sunnier, while the eastern sides experience more rain, clouds and wind.

In general, Fiji has two seasons: the dry-



Snorkelers bask in Fiji's crystal clear warm water, which supports a prolific community of hard and soft corals.

cool season (May to October) and the wet-warm season (November to April). The dry months are still subject to overcast days and sporadic rain showers but less likely to have cyclones or other large tropical storms. Most people prefer to visit Fiji during the dry winter months. During this time, trade winds keep the air fresh and daytime temperatures typically range from 75 to 85°F.

Imagine a South Seas paradise and you imagine Fiji—soft balmy breezes caress palm trees that cast shadows on secluded beaches of white sand. A tranquil lagoon of crystalline aquamarine water stretches to the horizon and beyond. As day turns to dusk, the fiery orange sun ignites the sky with yellows, reds and purples, mirrored off the shimmering surface of the sea.

The lush tropical splendor above the water is equaled below the ocean's surface. Sea temperatures range from the high 70s to low 80s (°F), perfect for healthy reefs. Fiji offers some of the best snorkeling in the South Pacific. And, for those familiar only with the Caribbean, Fiji's waters hold some delightful surprises and contrasts.

For snorkelers, one of the most striking features of Fiji's reefs are the bommies. These large coral heads rise like pinnacles from the ocean's depths to within just a few feet of the surface. They really seem custom designed for snorkelers. The low tide limits coral growth so, typically, bommies have expansive, relatively flat tops in very shallow water, even though the base may be hundreds of feet deep.

During my most recent visit, our snorkeling group was based on Kadavu, the fourth largest of Fiji's islands. In the bay, a string of offshore bommies gave us the perfect opportunity to examine prolific marine life. The most immediately stunning element is the corals themselves. A wreath of outstretched hard corals surrounds the upper edges and sides of the bommies. Beneath the hard corals, outgrowths of yellow and red soft corals emerge. Known as the "soft coral capital of the world," Fiji's reefs can be as colorful as a tropical sunset.

Numerous creatures also distinguish the South Pacific from the Caribbean. Clownfish, sometimes called anemonefish because they live among the protective tentacles of anemones, are easily viewed by snorkelers. Another fascinating fish is the dramatically plumed lionfish. They swim slowly, are visually obvious and, although their long red-orange spines are venomous, snorkelers are not part of their diet.

Fiji's waters also contain black and white Banded Sea Snakes, a marine reptile. They are also poisonous; in fact their venom is considered more deadly than a king cobra's. Fortunately, their fangs are small and placed in the rear of their tiny mouths. As reptiles, they breath air and must sometimes share the surface with snorkelers. Don't worry, no one has ever been bitten—or at least I've

never heard a first-hand account!

Not long ago I had the privilege of sailing on the *Nai'a*, a 110 foot Fiji-based live-aboard. Although it typically caters to serious divers, many of the places we visited featured exquisite snorkeling as well. Of these, perhaps the most outstanding was a bommie named **E-6** as a tribute to the excellent photo opportunities. In addition to all the usual sealife, snorkel-



*Fiji's coral bommies rise hundreds of feet from the ocean floor to just below the surface, allowing snorkelers to feast their eyes upon soft coral wonderlands populated by golden Anthias—above—and Emperor Angel fish (*Pomacanthus imperator*)—left.*

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Travel Information

Air Pacific has recently introduced a twice weekly non-stop flight from Los Angeles to Fiji's International Airport at Nadi. Although the flight is about 10 hours, its non-stop feature makes Fiji one of the most accessible destinations for a truly South Pacific snorkeling experience. Most Fijians speak excellent English and the area is virtually free of malaria. For more information call the Fiji Visitor's Bureau.

Air Pacific (800) 227-4446

Fiji Visitor's Bureau (800) 432-3454

Sea For Yourself (415) 322-1494

ers can see schools of Barracuda, jacks, unicornfish, Manta Rays and, occasionally, reef sharks. It's truly world-class snorkeling.

Excellent snorkeling conditions are also found on the protected sides of Fiji's barrier reefs and inside their sheltered lagoons. In many areas, impressive coral communities are also accessible from shore. On the small island of Nananu-i-ra, just off the north coast of Viti Levu, white sand beaches are fringed with elegant soft corals populated by numerous juvenile reef fish.

In general, Fiji caters to the independent snorkeler but guided snorkeling, while still in

its infancy, is a growing service many visitors appreciate. An expanding number of resorts are learning to recognize snorkelers' needs and some have daily boats that will take snorkelers to outlying reefs and bommies. Although there may be others, at least one American travel operator, Sea For Yourself, specializes in educational guided snorkel trips to Fiji.

With more than 300 islands, hundreds of miles of reefs and what many consider the friendliest people in the world, Fiji welcomes guests with broad smiles and open arms. Once you visit, it's an embrace you'll never forget. 🐠

Bonaire's Guided Snorkeling Centers

The businesses listed in this section offer specialized services for visiting snorkelers. All of the resorts offer a daily, ongoing program of reef education and fish identification, giving snorkelers a unique experience. All of the Snorkel Tours featured in the Bonaire Guided Snorkeling Program begin with a one-half hour Slide Show followed by a guided tour to some of the Caribbean's finest shallow coral reefs!

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Dive Notes

PLATINUM PRO AWARD'S FIFTH ANNIVERSARY: The Platinum Pro 5000 Diver awards program has reached a major milestone. Founded in 1992, the annual award, which recognizes divers who have made an unbelievable 5,000 dives, is celebrating its fifth anniversary.

The list of the 891 Platinum Pro recipients—they're from 55 countries—reads like a Who's Who of Diving. Notable retailers, resort operators, scientists, manufacturers, photographers and publishers all carry a Platinum Pro 5000 Diver certification card. The card, issued by Scuba Schools International (SSI), is available only by application.

To apply, divers need to have made 5,000 dives, regardless of original certification. SSI is soliciting nominations for the fifth anniversary Platinum Pro 5000 Diver awards in 1997. Nikon, a co-sponsor, is calling for slides from current Platinum Pros for the awards celebration presentation, held each January at the Diving Equipment and Marketing Association Show. Platinum Pros also look forward to seeing their names printed in SKIN DIVER Magazine, another co-sponsor.

To apply for the Platinum Pro award or to submit a slide for the presentation, please call SSI Headquarters at (800) 892-2702 or (970) 482-0883, fax (970) 482-6157 or e-mail admin@ssiusa.com.

U.S. DIVERS' WATCHES: U.S. Divers has a new series of Jean-Michel Cousteau/Swiss Army dive watches.



Combining French style with Swiss accuracy, these are distinctive timepieces. Water resistant to 200 meters, they feature sapphire glass crystals, ETA automatic (non-battery) Swiss movements and a two year warranty.

There are 11 different styles available, including the choice of a water-resistant blue leather band or metal bands with a polished or brushed finish. On the premier model the watch face swivels to reveal a built-in compass. All watches feature Jean-Michel Cousteau's signature and dynamic "manfish" logo. A portion of the price of each watch sold will be contributed to the Jean-Michel Cousteau Institute.

For more information, contact U.S. Divers at (714) 540-8010.

ROGER ROTH SEASPACE U/W PHOTO COMPETITION WINNER: Montgomery,

Ohio resident Roger Roth was awarded first place in Houston's 27th Seaspace International Underwater Photographic Competition for his video production entitled *Innerspace Romance*. This documentary highlights courting and mating behaviors in creatures beneath the sea.

Roger uses his underwater educational productions for seminars and presentations given to schools, libraries, museums, senior centers and professional organizations. His footage is also used for curriculum development and commercial purposes. For more information, call Roger Roth at (513) 793-9896.

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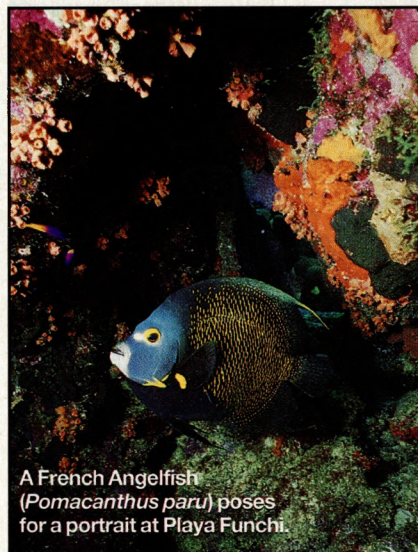
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BONAIRE'S Sunset Beach Resort



An Old Favorite with Special New Features

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY BONNIE J. CARDONE



A French Angelfish (*Pomacanthus paru*) poses for a portrait at Playa Funchi.

Imagine yourself on the Sunset Beach Hotel's long, sandy beach. The sky is a bright, unpolluted blue. Cooling trade winds blow through tall palm trees. The warm waters gently lapping the sandy beach are a clear aquamarine; a diver's aquarium without walls, they teem with abundant, diverse and friendly marine life. Almost everything you could want is only steps away. There's a coffeeshop just off the hotel lobby; a late night bar; a lovely freshwater pool; a thatched roof restaurant/bar with excellent food; tennis courts; a variety of watertoys for rental, including Ocean Kayaks, windsurfers and sailboats (instruction is available for the latter two); mountain bikes for rental; a dive shop; and four dive boats.

You can dive whenever you want. The Sunset Beach Dive Center offers single tank boat trips mornings and afternoons, with boat night dives at least twice a week, more often upon request. Tanks, however, are available for shore dives 24 hours a day and

one of Bonaire's best shore sites, **Front Porch**, is right in front of the Sunset Beach Hotel. Here, the shallows are covered with corals and the drop-off begins close to shore. There are lots of fish and even the wreck of a small tugboat, the **New York**, in 50 to 70 feet of water. When diving the wreck, keep an eye out for the friendly eight foot long moray eel.

The Sunset Beach participates in the Bonaire Guided Snorkeling Program, thus offers snorkel only, dive only or a combination of snorkel/dive packages. Walter Stark, Anton van der Heetkamp's partner in the Sunset Beach Dive Center, told me that, although he's been diving



Top: Sunset Beach's Playa Lechi Restaurant. Left: The freshwater pool is on the beach, just steps from the ocean.

Bonaire for six years, he saw more after attending the Guided Snorkeling slide presentation than he ever had before. The program heightened his awareness of the island's marine life.

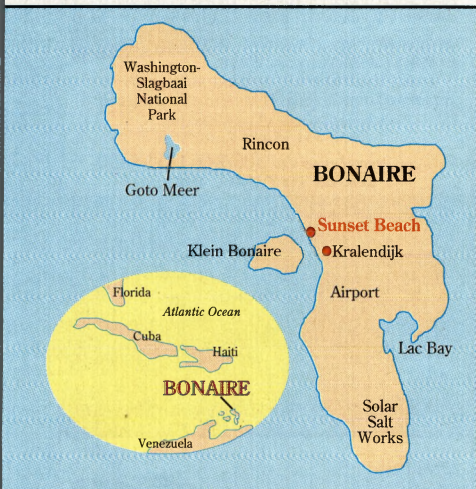
The dive center has a full line of snorkeling and scuba gear for rental as well as Nikonos cameras and video cameras. The staff of ten includes nine instructors, who offer almost all PADI courses and specialties and handle SSI referrals. Courses are available in English, Dutch, German, French or Spanish.

The Sunset Beach Dive Center is at the foot of the dive boat pier. Built-in freshwater tanks allow guests to rinse gear on their way off the boats; a secure storage area nearby eliminates the lugging of equipment back to their rooms.

I first visited the Sunset Beach Hotel



The Sunset Beach Dive Center offers daily boat trips; tanks are available for shore dives 24 hours a day.



eight years ago; a lot has changed since then. Under the auspices of Hugo Gerharts, well known and respected Bonaire entrepreneur, everything has been renovated and improved. The results of Hugo's energy and imagination are much in evidence; the renovated grounds, new swimming pool, expanded Playa Lechi Restaurant, new Whiskey Bar (managed by Hugo's son, Alexander, it is open 10:00 pm to 4:00 am) and new Coffeshop. Although all of the rooms have been updated and refurbished since Hugo took the reins in 1989, there

(Continued on Page 116)

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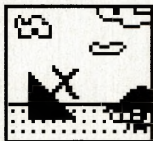
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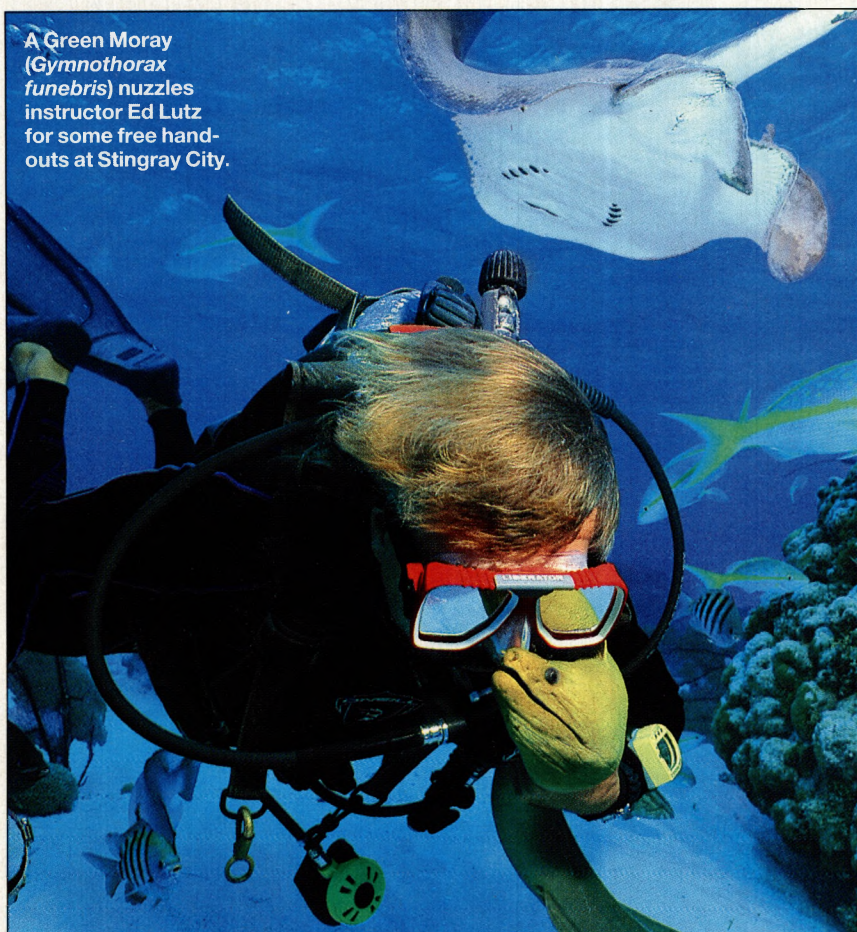
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A Green Moray (*Gymnothorax funebris*) nuzzles instructor Ed Lutz for some free hand-outs at Stingray City.



Grand Cayman's Treasure Island Divers The Staff Makes It Special

**TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY
BY BILL HARRIGAN**

Al Ford, the manager of Treasure Island Divers, knows diving is more fun with people who care. Everyone in a quality dive operation has the necessary professional qualifications, the trick is to find people with the right personalities and dedication. So, he looks for instructors who not only like diving but enjoy sharing the experience. The result? A PADI Five Star Instructor Development Center where the people really make you feel welcome.

The Treasure Island Divers facility on Seven Mile Beach in Grand Cayman was also designed with fun and relaxation in mind. A large round tiki hut overlooks the ocean and a volleyball net is permanently set up on the sand. A cut in the ironshore, as the beach rock is called, gives Treasure Island Divers the only dock on Seven Mile Beach. Inside the shop you can rent any dive gear you need, including computers. Computer divers are welcome here and qualified divers are free to follow their computer profiles. Instruction from the PADI Discover Scuba Diving resort course to instructor development is available, as well as all of the warm water PADI specialty courses.

The Treasure Island Divers photo and



Treasure Island Divers' professional staff.



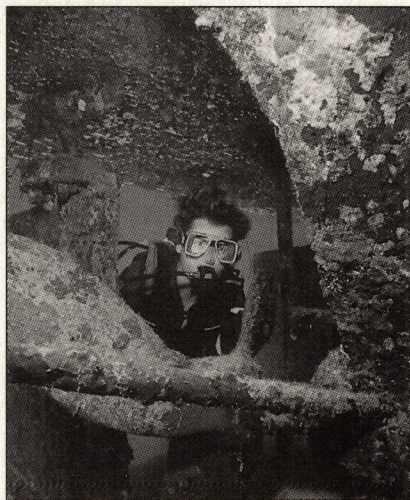
Left: Darren Peterson exposes a juvenile Trumpetfish attempting to hide next to a red sponge. **Below:** A neck crab, sporting a lush coat of hydroids, perches on a Common Seafan at Royal Palms Ledge.



video center offers rentals and instruction, featuring Sony camcorders and Nikonos V cameras with a good selection of accessories. Custom videos and photo sessions can be arranged for a personal record of your trip.

Listening to the instructors from Treasure Island Divers talk with divers, I realized they were exceptionally skillful and unobtrusive in making sure everyone had a safe and enjoyable dive. Without being overbearing or condescending, they suggested things that made the Grand Cayman dive experience better for those on their boats. For instance, instructor Darren Peterson was talking with a couple who frequently have trouble clearing their ears, especially on the first few dives of a trip.

Darren advised them that tilting the head to one side when clearing the ears sometimes helps divers who are having a problem. This position stretches the neck muscles and helps open the eustachian tube. The other staff members all had similar insights to relate, based on their many years of experience. What makes these suggestions particularly useful is they weren't offered in an "Ho hum, let's go through the motions and get another dozen



The Doc Poulson, a 70 foot cable layer, is a fascinating, beautifully intact and easily explored wreck in only 50 feet of water.

divers into the water" attitude. The staff members at Treasure Island Divers exhibit a degree of genuine interest in their guests and enthusiasm for the sport of diving that is refreshing. The way they run the boats, conduct the briefings and teach the courses will turn you on to diving in Grand Cayman. This is obviously a group of people who are good at their jobs and love what they do.

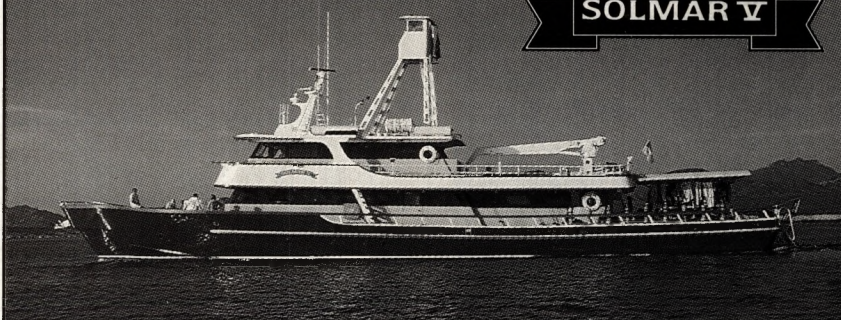
TREASURE ISLAND DIVE BOATS

All three boats in the Treasure Island Divers fleet are 45 feet and custom made, powered by diesel engines and designed for a stable, comfortable ride. The boats' names, *Gatlin*, *Twitty* and *Milsap Diver* reflect the owners' appreciation of country music. All the expected amenities are available, including fresh-water showers, marine heads, camera rinse barrels, coolers for your food and drinks and ice water. The main decks are wide and uncluttered for easy movement, with plenty of seating shaded from the sun. If sun is what you seek, though, there is a large sundeck above the main deck. Broad dive platforms and solid dive ladders make entries and exits easy. Watching one diver struggle to pull his fins off, instructor Phil Coxon suggested punching out the molding

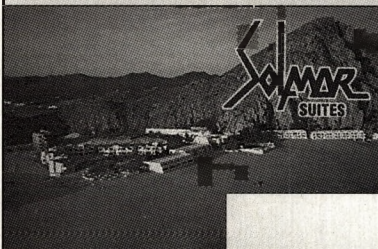
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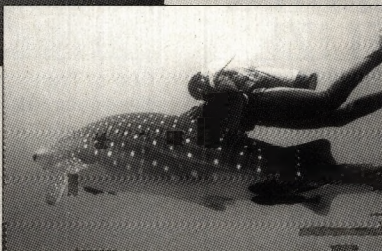
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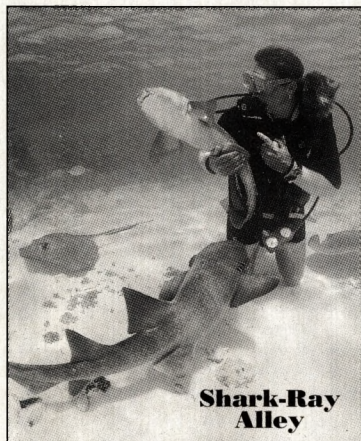
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90 SKIN DIVER OCTOBER 1996

TREASURE ISLAND DIVERS

plug on the bottom of the footpocket. This can help break the suction between bootie and fin, allowing the fins to slide off easier.

Two of the Treasure Island Divers boats are normally kept at West Bay and one is stationed at North Sound. This allows access to a full array of West, South, East and North Wall dive sites, as well as Stingray City and Sandbar. The West Side of Grand Cayman is on the schedule every day, with most dive sites less than 20 minutes from the Treasure Island Divers dock. **Stingray City** dives are planned four times a week. North Wall dive sites are more exposed to the wind, making them somewhat weather dependent but Treasure Island Divers plans trips there whenever possible. Provided the weather cooperates, a



Two of Treasure Island Divers' 45 foot dive boats: *Milsap Diver* and *Twitty Diver*.

three tank trip for a minimum of six divers can also run to the more remote east side. This is normally a summertime trip, when the trade winds slacken. Night dives are scheduled twice a week or whenever five or more divers express an interest. Transportation is provided from the Treasure Island Divers shop on Seven Mile Beach to the North Sound boat. Tanks and weights are already on the boats when you board, with your choice of 80, 72 or 65 cubic foot aluminum tanks.

Al emphasizes comfort and convenience in the Treasure Island Divers operation. He has a policy, for instance, of using all three boats to avoid crowding. Although each boat can handle 25 divers comfortably, whenever there are 15 divers another boat is added. Everyone isn't put on one boat just to avoid operating a second boat. Complimentary mesh dive gear bags are another convenient service. You receive a numbered bag when you sign in and for the rest of your stay Treasure Island Divers takes care of your gear. After each dive it is rinsed, stored and put on the right boat for your next dive. If you prefer to handle your own equipment, a secure gear locker is available.

GRAND CAYMAN DIVING

Grand Cayman has something special for every diver, from deep walls to shallow

reefs to wrecks. The water temperature is about 84°F in the summer and 78°F in the winter, warm enough that you can wear a shorty anytime of the year and be comfortable. Visibility usually exceeds 100 feet and at times it is gin clear. Many of the dive sites are in the calm water on the West Side of the island, well protected from the trade winds.

A U-shaped finger of coral with a deep undercut is the primary feature of **Royal Palms Ledge** but the surrounding reef is also excellent. The top of the reef starts at about 40 feet and, although it goes deeper, the most popular profile is to about 60 feet. The ledge has a cap of hard and soft corals and is wrapped underneath with a variety of sponges. The side of the ledge is packed with cleaning stations and you can see Tiger Groupers, Barracuda, Bar Jacks and Mutton Snappers being cleaned of parasites at frequent intervals around its perimeter. Instructor Kevin Kneafsey often suggests divers slow down underwater and take a few minutes to let the fish get used to their presence. I decided to take his advice and stopped in a sand channel about 60 feet deep between the coral fingers. After a few minutes, three Tobaccifish scooted out of a coral crevice and settled on the bottom. About six inches long with brown and or-



ange markings, these fish are not often seen by divers.

The **Doc Poulson** is a cable-laying vessel about 70 feet long that was sunk in about 50 feet of water. Still in the process of growing a fine coat of coral and sponges, the *Doc Poulson* is easy to dive yet fascinating. The cable machinery is still intact on the foredeck and the wheelhouse has a trapped layer of air inside the overhead that acts like a huge ceiling mirror. A vast colony of Garden Eels inhabits the sand around the vessel and the surrounding reef is worth exploring. This is an excellent dive for anyone taking instructor Stewart Esposito's tip, which is to take it easy on the first dive of your trip. Stewart has seen many divers visiting Grand Cayman select a deep wall site for their first dive, even though they haven't been diving for while and feel a bit rusty. Bottom time on deeper dives is precious enough, why spend it playing catch up?

From the surface, the blue-gray cones of Giant Star Coral stand out against the

(Continued on Page 132)

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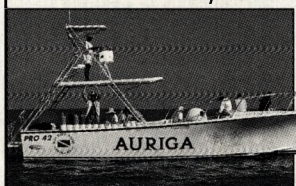
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Little is known about the heavily encrusted anchor at Anchor Wall except it has been wedged in the reef for about 300 years. Inset: The Pro 42 dive boat, *Manta*, at beachside pier.

The focal point of **Anchor Wall** is a large, ancient anchor stuck in a deep crevice, one of many that cuts through the crest of the Brac's south side walls. This fascinating spectacle has been here for an estimated 300 plus years but its history is unknown. The anchor, with its large iron flukes and coral encrusted shank wedged tightly in the crevasse, struck me as somewhat symbolic of Cayman Brac. The largest of Grand Cayman's two sister islands (the other is Little Cayman), this 12 by 2 mile sliver of land holds a substantial wealth of marine wonders.

The Brac does not lack walls. The word "brac" comes from the Gaelic for bluff and the island features one rising from sea level to 140 feet at its far eastern tip. While diving off this particular tip



Brac Reef Beach

Great Diving and Cayman Brac's Laidback Atmosphere

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY
BY WALT STEARNS

is weather dependent, the rest of the island is always open. The Brac's walls begin around the 55 foot mark and cascade straight down.

The island is shaped like a string-bean, with most of the dive sites off its north and south sides. The south walls feature highly serrated profiles, with tunnels, winding crevices and narrow chasms ready to spit intrepid visitors into the blue void on the other side. Some even offer a few surprises, such

The dramatic contours of Cemetery Wall, on Cayman Brac's south side, are overgrown with colorful tube and rope sponges.

as the mysterious anchor found at Anchor Wall.

A few of the favored dives on the south side include **Rock Monster Chimney**, **Wilderness Wall** and **Bluff Wall**. Wilderness Wall is somewhat different owing to the huge, 55 foot high by 40 foot wide pinnacle standing out from the upper rim of the coral precipice. The pinnacle is adorned with broad, deep water gorgonians and tangled tresses of red and lavender rope sponges. A large school of Horse-eye Jacks is frequently in attendance.

While the south side may possess the most dramatic contours, the north is the place for color.

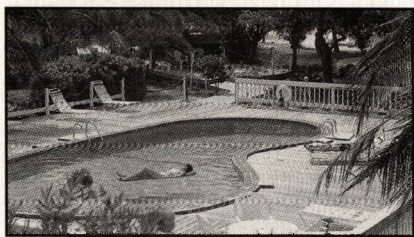
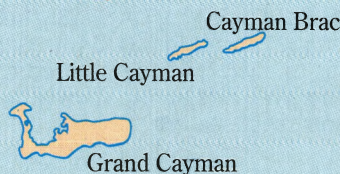
Strawberry Sponge, **Cemetery** and **Airport Wall** start about 50 feet below the surface. Their vertically sheer faces are abundantly colonized with brightly colored tube and rope sponges, deep water gorgonians and large Black Coral trees with clusters of Red Vase Sponges in their branches. Even on

days when the visibility is close to its best—it averages 120 feet—there is no way to see the bottom of these walls.

The Brac has an equal number



The Cayman Islands

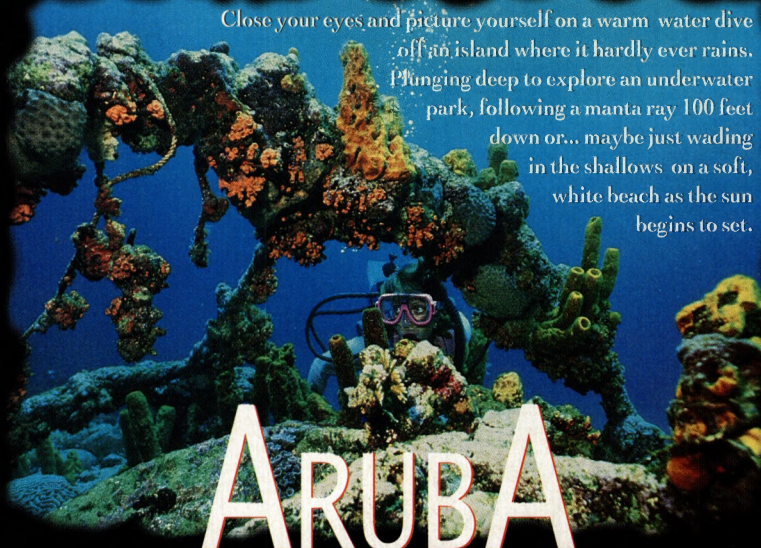


The resort features a freshwater pool with a large sundeck and six person spa. The walkway extends to the beachside pier.

of shallow sites and walls—for every wall site there is a corresponding and proportionally beautiful coral garden slightly inshore. Several of the more prominent shallow reef sites, between 15 and 40 feet deep, are **Bert Brother's Boulders**, **Green House**

(Continued on Page 113)

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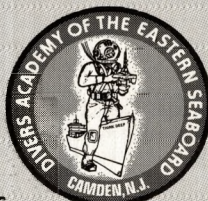
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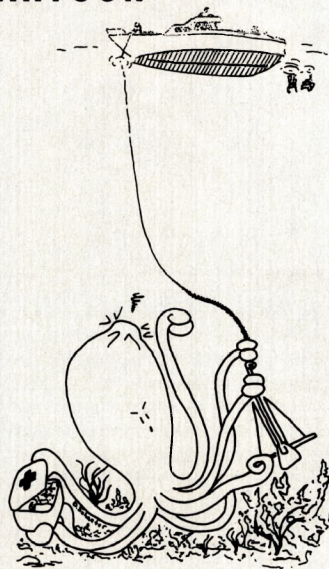
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CAYMAN'S NEW AREA CODE: As of August, the Cayman Islands have a new telephone area code. The rapid expansion of telephones, faxes, cellular phones and computer modems in the Caribbean has forced a split of the former Caribbean wide 809 area code. The Cayman Islands will have a brand new area code—345—exclusively assigned to them. Callers will still be able to use the old area code for one year, until August 31, 1997.

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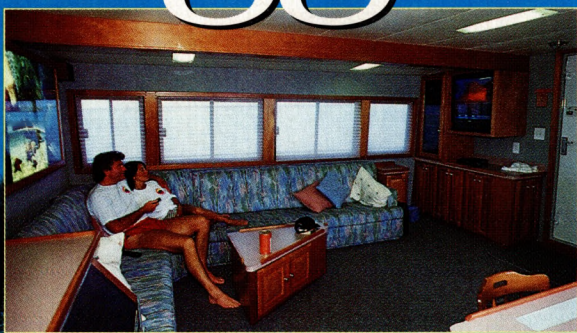
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SKIN DIVER OCTOBER 1996 95

A Magnificent New Vessel for the Aggressor Fleet

The Belize Aggressor III



BY BONNIE J. CARDONE
PHOTOGRAPHS BY BONNIE J. CARDONE
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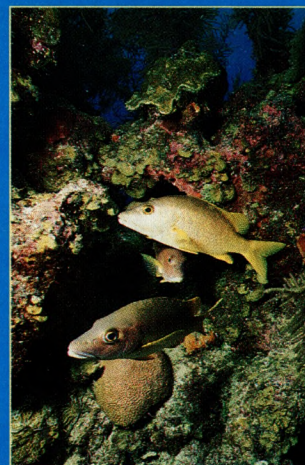
Each of the two salons has an entertainment center.

There's a brand new *Aggressor* in Belize and she's a beauty! The *Belize Aggressor III* came on station the end of June. Built in Louisiana, she is 120 feet long with a 22 foot beam. With a bright white streamlined hull and smoked glass windows, she's lovely to look at but her beauty is more than skin deep. Among her many amenities are nine staterooms for 18 guests, each of which has its own head and shower. Carpeted and featuring teak furnishings, these rooms have windows, individual climate control and TV with VCR.

One special feature is found below the dive platform—it's an underwater lighting system to facilitate night dives and night filming expeditions. And, the *Belize Aggressor III* is the first *Aggressor* Fleet vessel to offer nitrox fills.

The new *Aggressor* has four decks. The top deck is an open bridge; below it is the partially shaded sundeck. Along with one of the staterooms, this deck has a wetbar, barbecue, hottub and chaise lounges.

The main deck is the dive deck. There is a wide dive platform with twin ladders for easy boarding and a convenient storage rack for fins. A shower here allows guests to rinse the salt off just after stepping aboard. On the dive deck personal gear is stowed in individual lockers beneath the bench seats, tanks go in racks behind them. Since tanks are filled in place, you'll never have to remove your BC; just take the regulator off when you need a fill. In the middle of the



Top: The brand new *Belize Aggressor III* is a state of the art, 120 foot long luxury dive yacht that cruises Belize's colorful, life laden waters. Left: A formation of yellow sponges off West Point. Above: A laid-back trio of Schoolmasters.





deck and along the sides there are over-head bars for hanging dive suits.

Photographers will love the *Belize Aggressor III*. The dive deck has a fresh-water rinse tank for cameras and regulators. The two tiered, carpeted camera table has a compressed air nozzle and bars all the way around to prevent photo equipment from falling off. It also has a 110 volt charging station for strobes and lights. In the salons, both portable and built-in light tables provide that all important opportunity to review slides shot on the trip to make sure equipment



The *Belize Aggressor III* has four decks. In between dives, guests can relax on the partially shaded sundeck in chaise lounges or soak in the hottub. This deck also features a wetbar and a barbecue.

and techniques are working. Also, the *Belize Aggressor III* is one of only two Aggressor Fleet vessels with a video editing center for guest use.

Every Aggressor has its own photo pro. This person rents camera equipment, teaches photo courses leading to specialty certification, develops E-6 film daily and shoots a video of each trip that provides a wonderful souvenir.

Besides being the dive staging area, the forward half of the dive deck contains the air-conditioned dining salon, galley and a separate entertainment salon. Both salons have entertainment centers with TV/VCR and stereo and are very luxuriously furnished. The dining salon is set

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BELIZE AGGRESSOR III

up to also serve as a classroom.

The *Belize Aggressor III* has all of the safety and navigational equipment you would expect of a state of the art vessel: GPS, 36 mile radar, electronic compass, video depth sounder, weather fax, single sideband radio, two VHF radios and a dive tender. Its watermaker can produce 1,600 gallons per day and there is a storage capacity of 1,800 gallons. This *Aggressor* can hold 3,600 gallons of fuel and has a 1,600 mile cruising range. It is powered by twin 12-V71 diesels and can cruise at 15 knots. Scuba tanks are filled by two 5,000 psi Mako compressors with a 2,800 cubic foot cascade storage system.

While the physical features of a live-aboard are extremely important, so are the services, the food and the diving. The *Aggressor Fleet* knows that if they want you to return they'll have to treat you well. (Their 70 percent repeat rate is proof they do.) The Fleet motto is "Eat, Sleep, Dive." Food is critical since all that exercise makes divers hungry. *Belize Aggressor III* meals are exceptionally well prepared and plentiful. And, in between dives, snacks are offered.

Several full sets of gear are available, allowing guests the option of renting most of their equipment and lugging less luggage. If you are into earning specialty certifications, you'll be happy to hear that almost any course you're interested in is

AGGRESSOR FLEET/ JEAN-MICHEL COUSTEAU L'AVENTURE 1996 SCHEDULE

Jean-Michel Cousteau Team/
Nikonos Adventures

Truk Aggressor II	October 6 to 13
Palau Aggressor II	October 13 to 20
Kona Aggressor II	November 2 to 9

Project Ocean Search

Galapagos Aggressors I	December 12 to 21
------------------------	-------------------

1997 STAN WATERMAN PHOTO COURSES

Bay Islands Aggressor III
January 18 to 25

Kona Aggressor II
May 31 to June 7

Cayman Aggressor III
July 19 to 26

JIM CHURCH/STAN WATERMAN PHOTO COURSES

Okeanos Aggressor
July 15 to 25, 1997

Palau Aggressor II
April 20 to 27, 1997
April 27 to May 4, 1997
October 5 to 12, 1997

Truk Aggressor II
April 13 to 20, 1997
May 4 to 11, 1997
October 12 to 19, 1997

long Lighthouse Reef Atoll. She also occasionally visits Glover's Reef, Belize's third atoll. Belize diving is excellent.

Visibility is almost never less than 75 feet and is often better. The water temperature ranges from 79 to 83°F. Most of the dive sites have moorings in shallow water leading to a wall. Divers can cruise the wall in whichever direction and at whatever depth they choose then return to the boat in the shallows. The walls are festooned with healthy, colorful sponges and gorgonians—many formations reminded me of beautiful, exotic floral bouquets—and the fish population is abundant and diverse.

In the Turneffe Islands, the *Sayonara* is the low profile wreckage of a 50 foot boat. In and around the wreck look for schooling fish, moray eels, Spotted

Eagle Rays and Barracuda.

At **West Point**, off Lighthouse Reef, the wall starts in only 20 to 25 feet of water. There are lots of Black Corals, Giant Barrel Sponges and red finger sponges.

(Continued on Page 113)

AGGRESSOR FLEET VESSELS

Vessel	Length	# Divers	Cruise Length	Price*
Bay Islands Aggressor III Honduras	110'	18	6 days	\$1,195
Belize Aggressor II/III Belize	110/120'	18	6 days	\$1,495/ \$1,595
Cayman Aggressor III Cayman Islands	110'	18	6 days	\$1,495
Galapagos Aggressors I/II Ecuador	80'	14	6 to 10 days	\$2,195 (6 days)
Kona Aggressor II Hawaii	80'	10	6 days	\$1,695
Okeanos Aggressor Costa Rica	120'	22	10 days	\$2,695
Palau Aggressor II Palau	110'	16	6 days	\$1,995
Truk Aggressor II Truk Lagoon	110'	14	6 days	\$1,895
Turks & Caicos Aggressor Turks & Caicos	100'	16	6 days	\$1,495

*Prices listed are for 1996. Special cruises, such as those with Jean-Michel Cousteau, Stan Waterman or Jim Church, cost more but there are also cruises offered at discount rates—ask when you book!

available, making it easy to learn valuable skills while having fun.

THE DIVING

The *Belize Aggressor III* visits 20 mile long Turneffe Islands Atoll and 24 mile

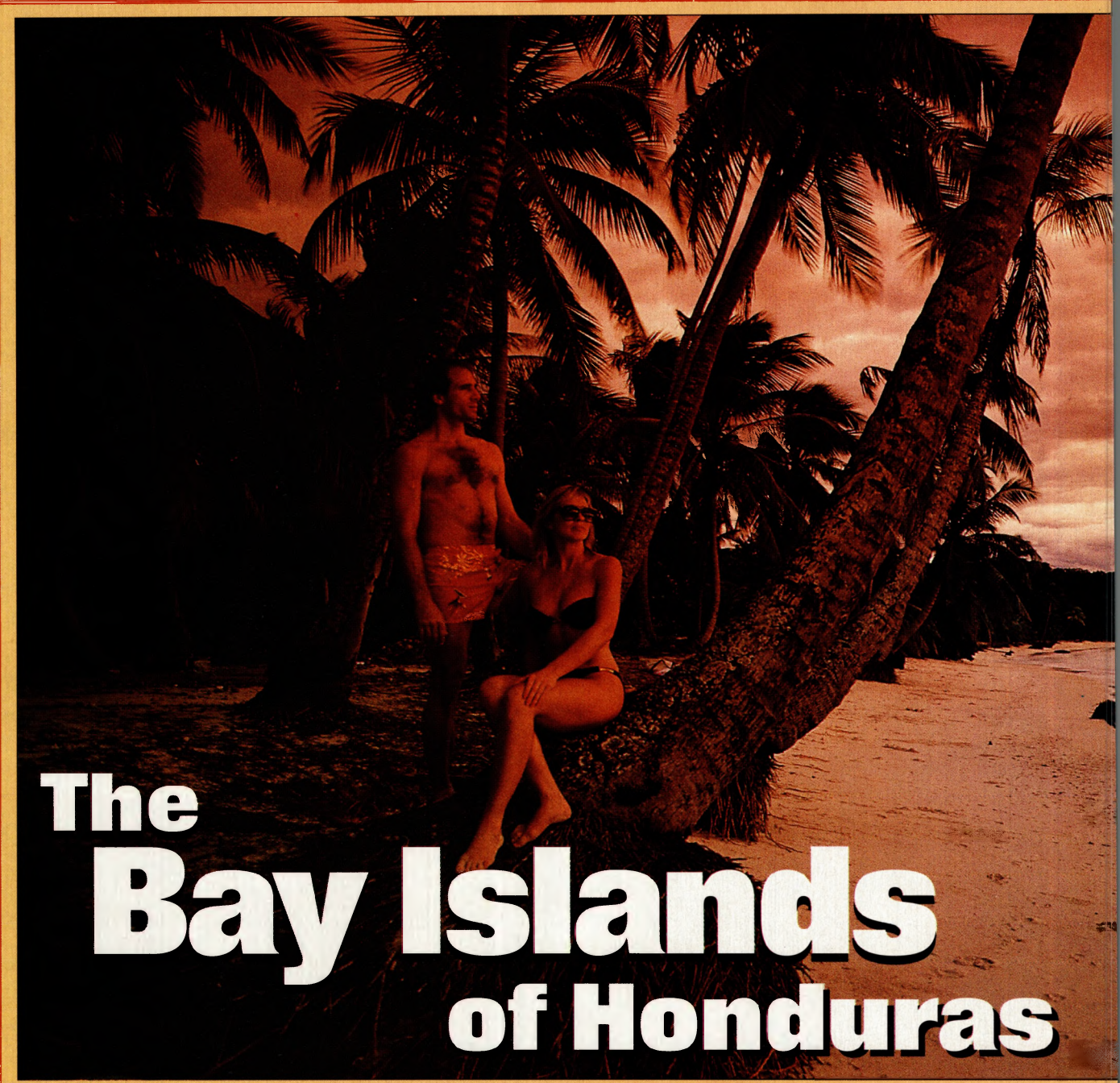
A large underwater photograph showing a diver silhouetted against a bright light source (the sun) filtering through a cave opening. A massive school of small, silvery fish is swimming in the water, partially obscuring the diver. The surrounding rock formations are dark and textured.

The Bay Islands of Honduras

A 1996 Dive Guide



PHOTOS BY RICK FREHSEE

A man and a woman are on a tropical beach at sunset. The man is standing, shirtless, wearing patterned swim trunks. The woman is sitting on a large, fallen palm tree trunk, wearing a dark bikini top and sunglasses. They are surrounded by palm trees and a sandy beach. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and blue.

The Bay Islands of Honduras

Adventures in Tropicality Above and Under The Sea

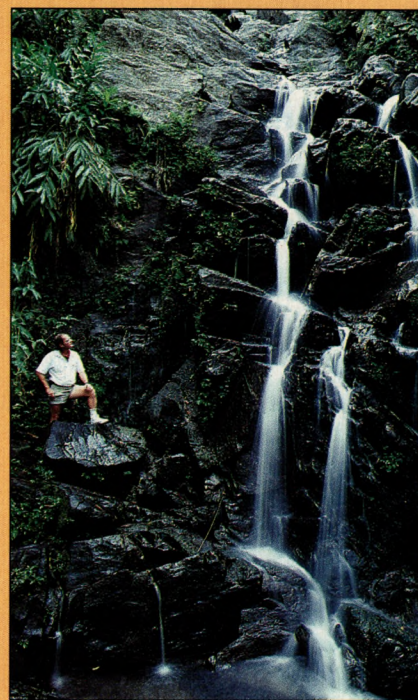
TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY
BY RICK FREHSEE

By the time you read this, it may be snowing in Chicago and dreams of the tropics will be swimming in your head. Palm-crowded islands, coral reefs and temperatures in the 80s (°F) are natural yearnings for any scuba diver or lover of tranquility. The good news is that you do not have to travel halfway around the world or search out the most far-flung islands to live your dream. Those picture postcard views of tropical paradise, complete with verdant hills, islands barely developed and bathed in turquoise waters and ringed by close, fringing reefs, are literally a few hours away.

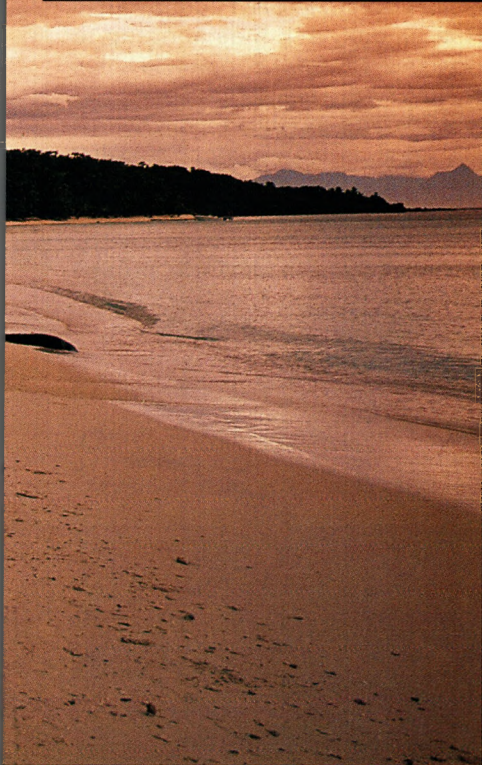
Hop on a modern TACA Boeing jet launched daily from Houston, New Orleans or Miami and head for the Bay Islands of Honduras. These isles are most definitely the stuff of dreams.

The Bay Islands of Honduras, three major islands (Roatan, Guanaja, Utila), three smaller islands (Helen, Morat, Barbareta) and about 65 keys including the Cochin group, lie 12 to 35 miles off the coast of Honduras in Central America. This wedge in the western Caribbean is the southern part of the Great Maya or Great Western Barrier reef system, the longest and most prolific in the western hemisphere.

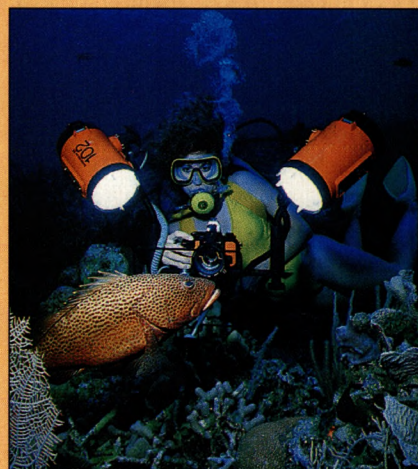
Left: Tabiyana Beach on Roatan. Inset: Dolphin Discovery Camp at the Institute for Marine Sciences.



Above: The serene Big Gully Waterfall on Guanaja. Below: A Red Hind (*Epinephelus guttatus*) waits patiently while an U/W photographer sets up her shot.



Top: A tiny Cryptic Teardrop Crab (*Pella mutica*) at Cayos Cochinos, a macro haven. Above: The spectacular diving off Roatan's Southshore.



Second in reach only to the Australian Barrier Reef, this system of fringing, barrier and atoll reef structures presents more than 60 species of stony corals and myriad invertebrate and fish species. Within this clear water world lurk unnamed nudibranchs the size of your fingernail, several species and subspecies of toadfish barely known, more Pillar Coral than anywhere else in the Caribbean, rare Black and White Crinoids, many miles of shallow, continuous walls, submerged ancient river beds, waterfalls, caverns, wave-notches and volcanoes and periodic encounters with Whale Sharks, the largest (12

to 60 feet long) fish in the sea.

Although thousands of divers have visited the Bay Islands during the past 25 years, it is not a crowded paradise. Except in a few areas of Roatan, dive resorts are infrequent and scattered; rarely are the reef sites busy with boats. Although creature comforts exist in all forms, the emphasis in these beautiful isles has been and continues to be on nature and tranquility. Even the larger dive resorts (a large hotel in the Bay Islands is a low rise with 60 to 80 rooms) tend to emphasize necessities like diving, nature, food and peacefulness rather than luxuries such as room

service and air-conditioning (some guest rooms are air-conditioned). That several of these resorts are among the most popular dive resorts in the world is a fact and a testimonial to their superb service and ambiance. However, compared to most dive island destinations, visitor arrivals are still at a trickle. All that is changing, however. You might want to plan a trip to the Bay Islands before the trickle becomes a flow.

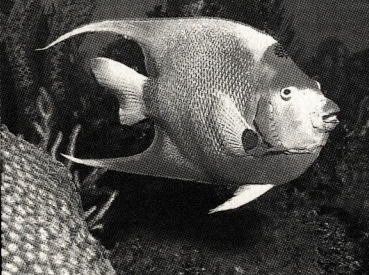
Central America, and Honduras especially, is now a preferred destination. Attitudes about and within the region are changing dramatically. Costa Rica has led the way toward natural adven-



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The Bay Islands of Honduras

ture and ecotourism. Belize is not far behind. With new infrastructure, national parks and wildlife refuges created every day, now is the time for Honduras. This country is a diverse, tropical masterpiece with an almost unfathomable wealth of natural and archaeological assets. Besides the Bay Islands, there is the magnificent ancient Maya site of Copan and beautiful places to see such as the Cuero y Salado Wildlife Refuge. Besides scuba diving, there are river trips, white water rafting, horseback riding, rain forest treks, hiking, arts and crafts and museums and archaeological ruins to explore.

Another thing that Honduras, Costa Rica and Belize share in common is a government system devoted to democracy. If you still think of Honduras as a place of banana republics and revolutions, you are sadly out of touch with the real Central America and missing out on one of the greatest travel experiences on the planet.

Modernization has come to parts, if not most, of the Bay Islands. Roatan now boasts one of the most modern airports in all of Central America. Paved roads have recently come to Roatan and Utila (or at least paved sections of roads). New initiatives are underway to improve sewage and protect ground water supply. The Bay Islands Conservation Association (BICA) has become the islands' major advocate for environmentalism. The entire Bay Islands is now under at least some form of wildlife and environmental protection. Important reef studies and

coral monitoring are now underway in Roatan and Guanaja. Phones and fax lines are available at most resorts. In just a few short years, Utila has become a major dive island, boasting 16 dive operators and several new resorts.

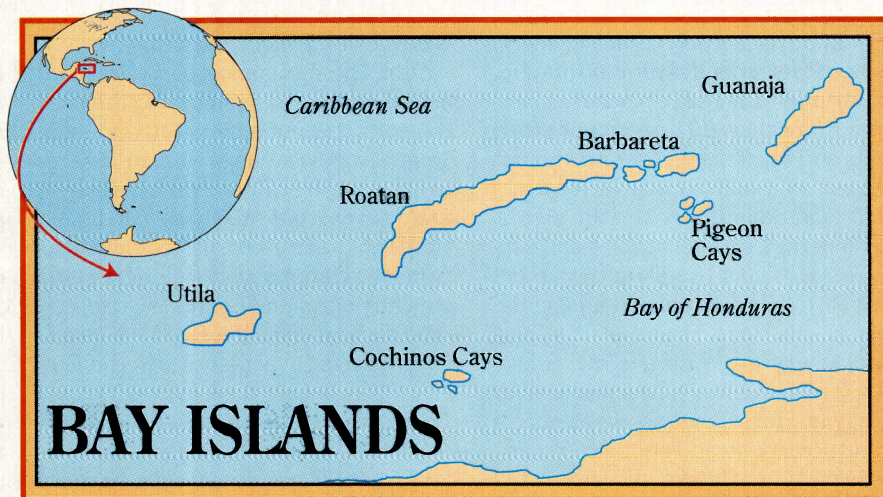
GETTING THERE AND ARRIVAL

Honduras is actually easy to get to from the U.S. TACA, American and Continental all fly daily from several U.S. gateways (Houston, New Orleans and Miami are the most popular) into San Pedro Sula. (San Pedro Sula, near the coast, is the hub and the second largest city. Tegucigalpa is the largest city and the nation's capital.)

TACA of Honduras, the major carrier, flies directly to San Pedro Sula and Roatan daily and flies nonstop to Roatan via three U.S. gateway cities one day each week. It flies Boeing 737 and 767 jets and the in-flight menus and totally bilingual service are what you would normally call first class. TACA pilots are all IAA trained and certified; the all-jet fleet is maintained by the most modern facility in all Latin America.

All flights into San Pedro Sula connect with either Caribbean Air (new and island-owned), Islenia or Sosa Airlines

TACA has modern 767 and 737 aircraft and offers convenient flight schedules to San Pedro Sula and Roatan, Honduras.



Wild Things

Tucked in a corner of the western Caribbean are the incredible Bay Islands of Honduras – emerald islands rising from a turquoise sea. Just offshore are stunning coral gardens and a continuous range of undersea mountains. Here divers will find an amazing display of marine life, more than 60 species of stony corals and the widest selection of sponges imaginable.



And there is more to marvel on the Honduras mainland. Imagine a country that can offer you an ancient Maya city like Copan, charming colonial architecture, a sprawling Spanish fort, arts and crafts markets, botanical gardens, jungle treks and white water rafting tours with a system of national parks that protects rain and cloud forests and provides unforgettable wilderness vistas for photographers and adventurers...all in one...

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Roatan, Guanaja,
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HONDURAS

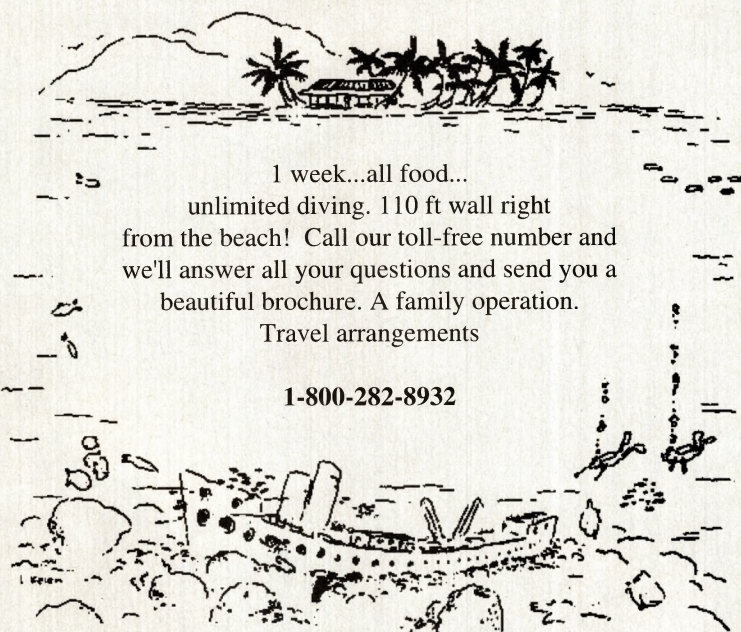
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The Bay Islands of Honduras

into the Bay Islands, featuring primarily twin prop service. In the islands, only Roatan handles jet service.

Immigration and Customs services are in San Pedro Sula or Roatan. You will need a passport. Each incoming flight to the Bay Islands is usually met by a representative from each dive resort. Ground transfers are by van and are normally included in one week dive packages (by far the most popular plan). There is a \$12 departure fee payable on your return. The currency is called the Lempira, after a famous Lenca (indigenous group) chief. Honduras is generally a very affordable destination; at press time one U.S. dollar was equivalent to 12 Lempira.

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

The Bay Islands are part of the Republic of Honduras but the islands and mainland are separated by more than the Caribbean Sea. Although English is popular in most mainland resorts, Bay Islanders primarily speak English in a sing-song manner similar to the Cayman Islands. (Actually, there are many Bay Islanders whose ancestors were Caymanians.) Baymen, as they are called, are largely descended from Scottish-English pirates, sailors and seafarers and/or African-Caribbean slaves.

These islands were originally inhabited by Paya or Pech Indians, one of many native American groups of which the famed Maya are by far the best known. Today, the only descendants of the Paya are found on the Honduran mainland. The islands seesawed back and forth between Spanish and English control over several hundred years, finally becoming firmly a part of Honduras in 1859. Minor forms of tourism came to the Bay Islands in the 1960s; the first dive resort opened on Roatan around 1970. Today, there are only a little more than a dozen major dive resorts.

THE UNDERWATER ENVIRONMENT

The Bay Islands dive environment is characterized by close-hugging, narrow but long and continuous fringing reefs, with an adjacent drop-off that ends as a sand and coral shelf at about

CORAL REEF MONITORING IN THE BAY ISLANDS

Coral bleaching is a biological phenomenon that periodically occurs throughout the tropical regions of the world. An unprecedented bleaching event occurred at the end of the 1995 summer season throughout the western Caribbean. The Bay Islands of Honduras was one of the regions affected. Triggered possibly by unseasonably high water temperatures, corals and sections of reefs expel resident algae from their tissues. When this occurs, corals appear "bleached" or pale in color. This is an unhealthy condition for corals that may be permanent or temporary depending on the degree and length of environmental disturbance.

Research is the key to identifying the environmental factor(s) causing the bleaching event and identifying responses and possible solutions. Recognizing a vital need for education and answers, a research team from Texas A&M University, Galveston, has been called to action. These investigators have been invited and sponsored by TACA Airlines and the American Central Corporation (the Central American Alliance of Airlines) and by the Posada del Sol Resort on Guanaja, from where the investigations will commence. Research and monitoring will be conducted by the Texas A&M team in connection with the government of Honduras and the Honduras University system.

Investigations currently underway will characterize coral species and distribution, monitor the extent of the coral bleaching event, identify causes and attempt to determine what other possible side effects have occurred. The first phase, an eight month pilot survey, will be completed in November.

Another coral study is being conducted on Roatan by the Roatan Institute for Marine Sciences. Both in-house and visiting university investigators are temperature monitoring a fore reef and buttress zone (wall) close to the resort complex. At regular intervals information is retrieved from the instrument array and downloaded into the RIMS computer file. These projects are aimed at providing information that is critical to understanding and preserving the natural resources and beauty of the Bay Islands.

110 feet. In many areas the reef falls, often vertically, to a dramatic abyss a thousand or more feet deep. In some places the reef borders a continental shelf that is often decorated by tall coral pinnacles a hundred feet or more from tip to base. These are locally called seamounts and they number in

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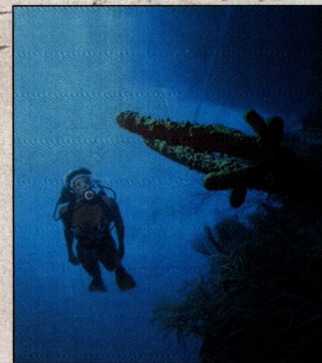
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Guanaja - Bay Islands - Honduras



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The Bay Islands of Honduras

the hundreds. Shallow reef gardens, prolific with statuesque Pillar and Starlet Coral, abound.

The reef crest is often very shallow and will break the surface, creating a wisp of foamy sea at the reefline, continuous for many miles except for the occasional break in front of a bay or bight. Here the fringing reef is locally referred to as a barrier reef. The advantage of this kind of reefline, so close to shore and so often vertical just to the outside, is twofold. First, many dive resort areas can feature easy shore diving. Second, many, if not most, dive sites are on or near a wall, creating a popular saying throughout the Bay Islands that "every dive is potentially a wall dive."

The topside island environment is rugged and hilly, approaching mountainous (the highest point in the Bay Islands is on Guanaja, where hill peaks approach 1,400 to 1,500 feet high) and this geology continues underwater. Bay Island reefs are peaked and mountainous. These huge corals create a Grand Canyon ambiance with tall pinnacles and spurs bisected with deep, craggy overhangs and sand channels. In places, usually associated with modern bays and ancient river valleys, it is often possible to find drop-offs perpendicular to the outside wall that tumble a hundred feet or more to a coral fissure or sand channel.

Nearly every species of hard or stony coral can be found in the Bay Islands. Standout species include the aforementioned Pillar Coral, unusually large pinnacles of Star and Starlet Coral and, in places, fields of golden Elkhorn and comparatively rare Staghorn Coral.

Sponges are another highlight. It has been said that more species, colors and types of sponges can be found in the Bay Islands than anywhere in the Caribbean. A typical wall site might harbor large, bulbous Orange Elephant Ear Sponges, long and squat Buff Tube Sponges, stringy, colorful Rope Sponges, giant Basket and Barrel Sponges and delicate cup and vase sponges (such as beautiful blue or purple Azure Vase Sponges) in symmetrical and asymmetrical shapes, all side

by side, creating a rich underwater bouquet. Unusual invertebrates that are somewhat site specific include huge clumps of white and yellow gorgonians (Roatan), Black and White Crinoids (Guanaja and Utila) and rare and unusual nudibranchs and tunicates (Utila and the Cochinos Isles).

The quantity and quality of sponge and coral growth on the majority of reef structures creates not only decoration but also a construction material that connects spurs overhead. Many coral chutes and fissures are thus formed, resulting in caverns and enclosures to explore. Some caverns are volcanic in derivation and, once inside, removed from the light of day, a diver's light will reveal the rolled and pleated look of pillow lava formations—indicating the kind of volcanic upheaval that accompanied the island creation process. The spiny, craggy look of much of the above water and undersea topography in the Bay Islands underscores its derivation from the submarine mountain ridge extending from the Sierra de Omoa mountain ridge in northwestern Honduras.

Both coral and pelagic fishes, solitary and in schools, are well represent-

ed throughout the Bay Islands. The close reefs and continuous walls provide habitat for a mixture of marine life. Common are schools of Creole Wrasse, Brown and Blue Chromis, Blue Tangs, many Hamlets, angelfish, parrotfish, snappers, grunts, hinds and groupers. At the edge of the drop-off you can expect turtles, Eagle Rays, Barracuda and pelagic species such as jacks, mackerel, Wahoo and Kingfish. An indigenous toadfish, octopus and huge coral crabs are often sighted at night. There is a corridor and a known triangle between points at Cochinos, Utila and Roatan that produces regular sightings of Whale Sharks. Probably the Caribbean record for Whale Shark frequency occurred off Utila, where seven separate sightings were once recorded in a single day.

BAY ISLANDS DIVING

Most dive operators are affiliated with or operated by dive resorts. However, there is a recent trend of development with independent operators in nearby villages or resort areas. This is most easily found in East Harbor Town on Utila and in West End Village, Roatan. Some resorts feature shore

diving; however, shore diving is not a general activity. Most diving, even near shore, is boat diving, as ironshore or large rocks often form the shoreline. Also, the reefline, so close to the surface, is difficult to cross over from shore.

Boats generally access the reef in front of bights or bays or through occasional channels in the reef and then motor along to a selected reef site. Boat trips are generally short but all day picnic dives are also popular to reach special sites. Most dive sites throughout the Bay Islands are moored and buoyed in the popular style for dive-developed islands. There are currently from 40 to 60 moorings installed off each of the major islands, plus the Cochinos Isles.

Each resort has from one to six custom dive boats, usually in the mid-size range. A common dive boat, popular in Roatan, is an island made, custom, wood hulled vessel, 38 to 42 feet long. Tank racks, storage, canvas tops, platform, ladder(s), safety and communications gear are standard. Many resorts and operators offer three or even four single tank boat dives each day, a minimum of one or two boat night dives per

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The Bay Islands of Honduras

week, one all day picnic boat trip per week and unlimited shore diving. Many divers make 20 or more dives in a week. There is an hyperbaric chamber in Sandy Bay Village on Roatan. Dive operators are uniformly protectionists and are environmentally educated and responsible.

ROATAN

The long and narrow island of Roatan (30 miles long and sometimes less than a mile wide) is the largest, most populated and most visitor-popular destination in the Bay Islands. Although developed to a greater extent than the other islands, it is still mostly wilderness and small villages. There are no chain hotels or high rise structures in any of the Bay Islands and government and developers, for the time being, intend to keep it that way. Although there are about 18,000 people on the island, they are scattered in small towns or villages along both coasts. Most are fish-

ermen, farmers or employed in the tourist industry. The major villages are Coxen Hole, the capital and airport; the commercial fishing towns of French Harbor and Oak Ridge; and the local village of Flowers Bay—all on the south side. The villages of West End and Sandy Bay, local and tourist communities and Punta Gorda, a Black Carib (Garifuna) community, are on the north coast.

A good, if occasionally winding and hilly, paved road now links West End Village at the northwest side of the island to Coxen Hole, French Harbour and nearly to Oak Ridge on the south-east coast. Taxis or vans are generally available and there are three car rental companies on the island. Arts and crafts shops, restaurants, bars and banks are at resorts and in towns.

There are several major dive resorts on Roatan. Fantasy Island Beach Resort, Dive and Marina is a guest room style luxury resort and marina on a 15 acre private island near French Harbour (south coast). Anthony's Key is a bungalow style resort complex on a tropical islet and verdant hillside in Sandy Bay (north coast). CoCo View Resort is a self-contained cottage, bun-

galow and cabana community on a small sandy islet and lagoon (south coast). Next to Oak Ridge is the Reef House, a traditional island cottage perched on the edge of a coastal reef flat (south coast). In the village of Punta Gorda is Ben's Resort, Restaurant and Dive Shop, a small stilt house grouping at the edge of the sea (north coast). Sunset Inn/Ocean Divers is a Spanish style resort, including guest rooms, restaurant and dock, in West End (north coast). Bay Islands Beach Resort is an attractive oceanfront guesthouse retreat in Sandy Bay (north coast).

An excellent diving environment exists along both southern and northern coasts and at the western tip of the island. Along the northern coast is a barrier type reef leading to the scenic Tabyana Beach, one of the prettiest beaches in the Bay Islands. Here, at **West End Wall**, is a series of excellent drop-off sites. North coast dive sites include **Peter's Place**, **Half-Moon Bay Wall** and **Mandy's Eel Garden**, featuring drop-offs with associated canyons, pinnacles and swim-throughs.

Along the south coast is a fringing reef marked with small cays, bays and



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Bay Islands Beach Resort is 44 acres of panoramic waterfront and hillside within the Marine Reserve. A two-story Spanish-style plantation house and beach villas sit amidst beautifully landscaped property with fruit and nut trees, flowers, and towering coconut palms. Just off the beach is the famous Spooky Channel, one of the best shore (and boat) dives on the island.

Swim through an eerie crack in the reef which opens onto the breathtaking wall. Or snorkel along the pristine reef and view the spectacular display of fishes and corals.

Eight-day packages include seven nights' air-conditioned accommodations, 16 boat dives (two in the morning, one in the afternoon, one night dive), unlimited shore dives and three delicious meals a day. Festivities featured are the Tabyana Beach picnic trip, Land Crab Safari, the traditional lobster buffet and Limbo and Punta Party with music and dancing on the beach.

BOOK IT! Group leaders call for "Rent The Entire Resort" details. An individual seven-night package is \$725 pp/do; non-divers, \$650 pp/do. Call you local dive shop or Bay Islands Beach Resort toll-free at **(800) 4 ROATAN** or **(561) 624-5774**, fax **(561) 624-7751**.

harbors. Popular sites include **Insidious Reef**, **Valley of the Kings** and **Calvin's Crack**, huge coral pinnacles laced with sponges and gorgonians.

GUANAJA

Each of the major Bay Islands has its own distinctive personality. Guanaja is a very beautiful and interesting island and quite different both underwater and topside from Roatan, yet it is only 15 miles away. Guanaja is the tallest of the Bay Islands and least developed. It is also the farthest from the mainland. Its 6,000 residents still prefer boat transportation; there are no roads or land vehicles on the island. The capital is Bonacca, a man-made islet 600 yards off the south shore. There are only two other villages on the coast. Guanaja also has the only river in the Bay Islands and the islands' only waterfall. A canal, running alongside the airstrip, bisects the island, connecting both coasts to boat traffic.

Guanaja has several mid-sized dive resorts. The Bayman Bay Club is a lovely jungle lodge with cottages immersed in greenery at the edge of a hillside and sand fringed lagoon (north coast). Posada del Sol (Inn of the Sun) is a handsome Spanish villa of uncommon charm and considerable tropical elegance (south coast).

The northern coast features a nearly continuous fringing reef with drop-offs that occasionally begin in 20 to 30 feet of water. North coast sites include the **Bayman Drop**, a shallow coral-lined wall, **Bayman Pinnacle**, a coral tower decorated with sponges and deepwater fans, and **Black Rock**, a series of volcanic caverns.

The southern fringing reef is marked by a string of palm-crowded offshore islets. Significant dive sites include **Jim's Silverlode**, a coral amphitheater and a swim-through that leads to the outside wall. The wreck of the **Jado Trader**, an island freighter sunk in 90 feet of water, is the Bay Island's premier shipwreck dive. **Vertigo**, another popular site, features spectacular rolling hills of coral often capped with rare Black and White Crinoids.

UTILA

Utila has become a major diving island in a few short years. This is the smallest of the big three islands, the flattest and the closest (19 miles) to the mainland. An oblong shaped island, it has a prominent north and south fac-

ing coast, a shallow islet and coral dotted western end and a notable east end. The underwater distinction is that the southern and western sectors lie on the shelf that extends from the mainland, while the northern and eastern sectors face the abyss. Moored dive sites now extend around the island.

The southern fringing reefs face the drop-off that extends to a sand and coral shelf at about 110 feet. Highlights here include coral gardens with scads of Bluebell Tunicates, rare Orange-

lipped Bulb Tunicates and Black Coral trees that sometimes start in only 20 feet of water. Visibility is somewhat less than the outer islands and averages about 60 feet.

The northern reefs are mostly wall sites facing 1,000 feet of water. Here, the highlights are coral pinnacles and mountains of tumbling lettuce corals.

A special attraction off Utila is the opportunity to swim with a Whale Shark. Fifty or more encounters are recorded each year.

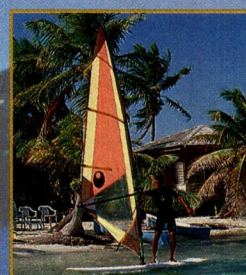
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infrastructure that includes several new and excellent resorts, all in or just west of the island town of East Harbour. The Utila Lodge, the first real dive resort on Utila, is a seaside lodge that has been in operation for several years. The new Laguna Beach Resort is an attractive grouping of bungalows and a main-house on a private sand and palm peninsula. Also new is the Utila Reef Resort, a self-contained divers' paradise on a narrow strip of land between a mangrove lagoon and the sea. Although new, these resorts are all attended by on-site and very experienced Utila dive operators.

LIVE-ABOARD BOATS

The Bay Islands proudly welcome two of the best live-aboard dive boats in the business. Peter Hughes' *Wind Dancer* and the Aggressor Fleet's *Bay Islands Aggressor* both operate out of Roatan. Both of these world-class dive vessels are exceptional in crew, ap-

pointment, service and itinerary. The sleek 110 foot *Bay Islands Aggressor* is berthed at Romeo's Restaurant in French Harbour. The handsome 120 foot *Wind Dancer* is headquartered in Coxen Hole. These quality vessels offer excellent support for serious divers and, especially, underwater photographers and videographers.

These live-aboards typically visit the very best sites around Roatan and continue with a flexible schedule that might include any combination of sites around Barbareta, Guanaja, Utila or the Cochinis Isles. The emphasis is always on discovery; a specialty is visiting several coral pinnacles and isolated reefs that dot the undersea topography around the islands. The Cochinis Isles are often a highlight where scores of rare invertebrates, tunicates and nudibranchs can be found for exceptional macro photography.

ADDITIONAL ATTRACTIONS

The selection of alternative attractions in the islands is considerable. Most are in keeping with the natural look and feel that is prominent throughout the Bay Islands.

Roatan: Special consideration

should be given to the Roatan Institute of Marine Sciences in Sandy Bay next to Anthony's Key Resort. Activities here include education and reef monitoring but the special attraction for visiting divers is the Dolphin Dive Program.

A Dolphin Snorkel Program is offered six days a week, several times a day; a Dolphin Dive Program allows a small group of divers to interact and observe natural dolphin behavior in the open water on a nearby reef. Reservations for both of these extraordinary activities must be made in advance.

In the same complex with RIMS is the small but excellent Roatan Museum, featuring professional displays of the island's cultural and ecological heritage. Carambola Botanical Gardens, also in Sandy Bay, features a nature trail that includes exotic island flora and a spectacular hilltop view of coastal Roatan. New on the island is Sea Blades, a sea kayak school and tour operation in West End. Tours include half day, full day, two day and even a week long tour.

Guanaja and Utila: The above water emphasis on island picnics and discovery tours, treks and visits is conducted with or without a guide.

TRAVEL TIPS

There is little downside to this island paradise. Food and water are safe at resorts but you might be careful elsewhere. With common sense employed, crime is not a problem in these islands. In sand areas, particularly on the coast, those "flying teeth" known



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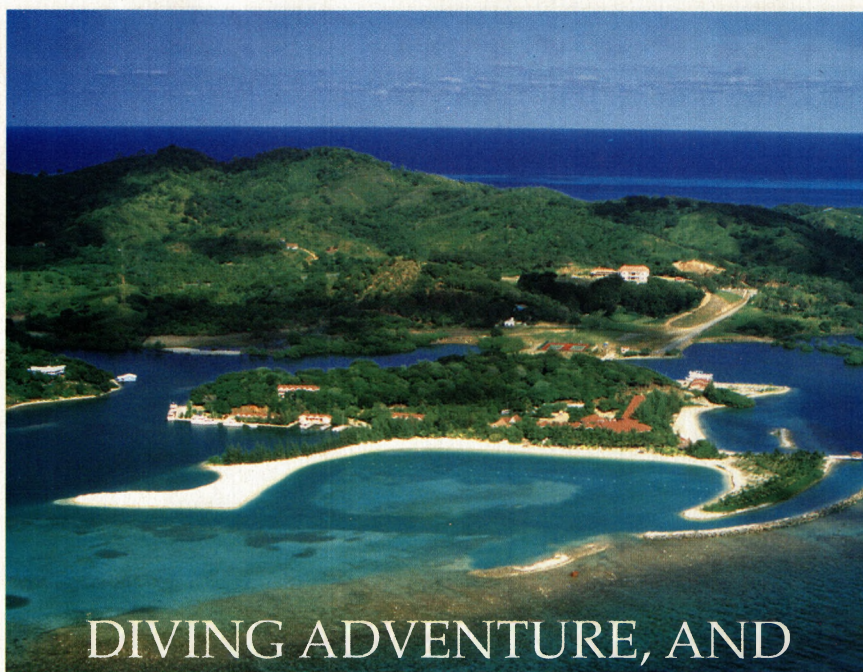
as sand gnats can be a nuisance—bring insect repellent. As with most tropical areas, malaria is neither common nor eradicated; consult your doctor as to whether you should take a preventative. The most common malady is sunburn. There is a rainy season (October through December). Air and water temperatures are tropical; a dive skin or thin wetsuit is normally needed year-round.

THE HONDURAN MAINLAND EXPERIENCE

Honduras is a country on the verge of discovery. Although tourism infrastructure is site specific, almost everywhere you travel in this beautiful country the buzzwords "ecotourism" and "sustainable development" can be heard. Travelers are now beginning to realize that Honduras (and indeed all of Central America) is a treasure trove of tropical nature with an incredible variety of scenery. You can find rolling pine forests, white washed colonial villages, lush rain and cloud forests, serene volcanic lakes, spectacular waterfalls, stunning palm lined beaches, tumultuous white water rivers and placid, slow moving jungle rivers. You can launch these experiences on the way to or from the Bay Islands. Costs, times and distances allow for easy access to the mainland. Most of these experiences are easily reached in single or group tours from the primary cities or towns of San Pedro Sula, Tegucigalpa or La Ceiba.

The number one mainland experience for most visitors to Honduras is the ancient Maya city of Copan. A three-hour drive from San Pedro Sula is the village of Copan Ruinas. Less than a mile away is the entrance to the principal site. Copan is a Maya masterpiece—a Classic Period (A.D. 200 to 900) site that is resplendent in Maya art and architecture. Copan is known for its incredibly detailed monuments and architectural sculpture, including the hieroglyphic stairway—a 2,500 glyph historical account of Copan and the deeds of its famous kings.

New this year (officially opened August 3, 1996) is the magnificent Copan Sculptural Museum, next to the site. You enter the huge complex from underground, winding through a cavern that represents both the archaeological tunnels that exit below external temples at the site and the throat of the mythological serpent, which an-



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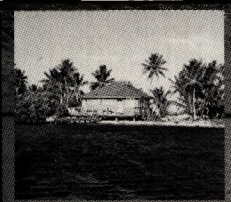


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cient Copanecs envisioned as a path of communication between gods and ancestors. The museum houses many restored architectural facades, structures and individual pieces, many never seen by the public. The masterpiece is without doubt the full scale replica of the Rosalila Temple, decorated in sculpted stucco and paint representing the peak artistic achievement of Maya culture. This spacious and very original museum is now one of the highlights of a visit to El Mundo Maya (The Maya World).

Honduras, in the middle of Central America, is a country about the size of Tennessee, with a narrow Pacific Gulf and a wide Caribbean coast. "Always the mountains" is a popular description of its mostly rural and wilderness interior. Numerous nature reserves, wildlife refuges and conservation areas now abound throughout the country, although visitor infrastructure is mostly rustic and rudimentary.

One such site, only 14 miles from La Ceiba, is the serene Cuero y Salado Wildlife Refuge. Here, at the convergence of two majestic jungle rivers, is an unlimited scenic panorama of rain forest and mangroves. This is also Central America's largest Manatee sanctuary. The waterways are accessed in small boats, with a guide, where you can cruise the rivers looking for howler monkeys, parrots, toucans and a variety of jungle life.

Also close to La Ceiba, at the base of the beautiful Pico Bonito National Park, is the Rio Cangrejal, a paradise for nature lovers and white water aficionados. Whitewater rafting tours are launched daily, possibly the most exciting alternative activity easily available to Bay Islands divers (often arranged as a day trip from the island). Also close to La Ceiba are several scenic waterfalls and a visit to a Garifuna or Black Carib village.

Shoppers will find arts and crafts throughout Honduras ranging from souvenirs to real masterpieces. Especially desirable are wood carvings, a true signature of the country. Mainland hospitality includes luxury hotels in major towns and cities with lodges, beach resorts and cottages in rural or wilderness settings.

BELIZE AGGRESSOR III

(Continued from Page 98)

As you're returning to the boat, look for Garden Eels, Peacock Flounders and Southern Stingrays in the shallows.

Northern Lighthouse Reef is Honey's territory. Also known as Pita, this wild Bottlenose Dolphin loves boats and people. Snorkeling with her is great fun. Recently, Honey has been seen with another dolphin. While that's great for Honey, divers have been seeing less of her. There's still a chance, however, that she'll brighten your day with an appearance.

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BRAC REEF BEACH RESORT

(Continued from Page 93)

and **Snapper Reef**. The key features of these sites are the massive 10 to 20 foot high Boulder Star Coral formations scattered across the bottom like large haystacks. From them the bottom slopes to 50 to 60 feet, ending at the wall. Between these two zones, long narrow stretches harbor Eagle Rays searching for small crustaceans in the sand. Reefs with similar bottom topography and coral formations include **Charlie's**, **Duppy's**, **School House** and **Buccaneer**.

VISITING/DIVING THE BRAC

Cayman Airways, the Cayman Islands' official flag carrier, flies to Cayman Brac several times weekly. Flights on 737 jets, originating in Miami, Tampa, Orlando, Atlanta and Houston, are direct to Grand Cayman with a short stop before they continue onto Cayman Brac. Flight time from Miami to Grand Cayman is one hour and ten minutes; the hop to the Brac is another 20 minutes—hardly long enough to settle into your seat!

For accommodations and diving, the Brac Reef Beach Resort is as good as it gets. Nestled among a landscape brim-

ming with coconut palms and seagrape trees, the Brac Reef Beach Resort features 40 modern, air-conditioned guestrooms overlooking a large sundeck with a swimming pool and six person spa. In addition to a choice of floorplans offering a single king or two queen sized beds, each room has a ceiling fan, tile or carpeted floors, color TV providing CNN, HBO and a few stateside channels, and large private bath. Ground level rooms have access to private porches; half of the second floor units feature a small balcony.

Outside, wooden walkways connect guest lodgings to several points on the

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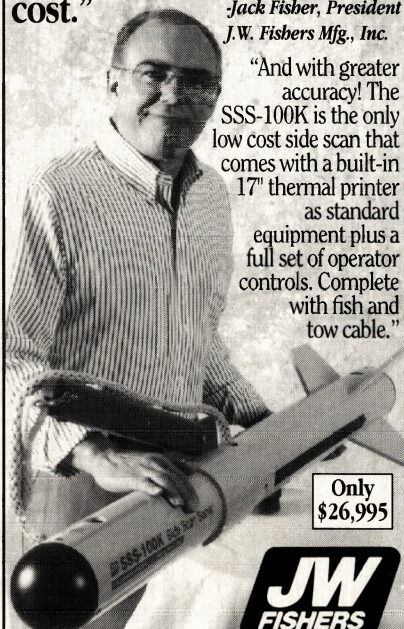
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resort grounds—the pool area and Coral Garden Dining Room, with patio and bar, which serves buffetstyle meals in air-conditioned comfort. The nightly dinner selection includes both Caymanian and Continental cuisine. The walkway extends to the resort's two story, beach-side pier (a great place to enjoy the soothing sea breezes and view) and Reef Divers.

Built to match its sister operation on Little Cayman, Reef Divers is fully equipped to cater to every need, from requests for rental equipment to quick equipment repairs. The facility is also a retail center, stocked with everything from sundries and T-shirts to mask, fins, snorkels and accessories. There is even a photo center with a full complement of film, batteries, rental Nikonos V cameras (with 35 to 15mm lenses and strobes) and two 8mm U/W video systems. Reef Divers can also provide anything from resort to advanced open water instruction, including several specialty ratings up to divemaster. The instructors are affiliated with either PADI, NAUI or SSI.



The comfortable lodgings at Brac Reef Beach Resort are nestled among coconut palm trees and face the soothing blue sea.

After checking in with the dive center, each guest is provided a numbered mesh bag for dive equipment. Simply stuff it with your gear, place it outside your room door and one of the staff members will cart it to the shop's gear storage room. From that point on it is automatically transported to and from the boat.

When it comes to dive boats, Reef Divers has an impressive modern fleet. It includes one Pro 42 jet boat, called the

Manta, and two Newton 42 Dive Specials named *Little Sister* and *Twin Sister*.

The Newton 42 Dive Specials, measuring 42 by 16 feet, have twin 3116 Caterpillar diesels, providing a quick cruising speed of 25 mph (even with a full load of guests—12 to 17—and dive gear). The aft deck is well designed to be roomy and user friendly. Tank storage is provided in the aluminum seat/rail assemblies along the sides, while access to the water is via a wide, stepdown dive platform with dual ladders. There are two freshwater showers for rinsing after the dive. Other amenities include a two tier, carpeted camera table, head, dry storage area, cold drinking water and a cooler stacked with a variety of snacks. The only thing missing is a rinse tank for dunking photographic gear between dives.

Reef Divers' staff members cater to their guests. After the dive briefing, a crewmember brings your tank down to the swim platform, you climb in and go. Following the dive, the tanks are changed by one of the crew and placed in their respective racks. Once the staff members have seen your initial gear set-up, they take over that task for the remainder of your visit. However, if you need to make last minute adjustments or double check gear before entering the water, you won't insult anyone.

Morning dives leave promptly at 8:30 for the two tank trips—customarily a wall site followed by a shallow reef. The afternoon schedule, slated as a single shallow dive in the 15 to 50 foot range, normally departs at 2:30. Night dives, usually scheduled the same day as the **Little Cayman/Bloody Bay Wall** outing, leave the dock at 7:30, following dinner. The Little Cayman dives are three tank trips, offered two to three times a week (with lunch at Little Cayman Beach Resort).

Experienced buddy teams with computers are basically permitted to dive as they wish, as long as they stay within the guidelines set by the Cayman Islands Watersports Operators Association—110 feet maximum depth, no decompression dives with a 500 psi reserve at the end of the dive.

Don't have a dive computer? No problem! Among its wealth of rental equipment, Reef Divers includes Sea Quest's top of the line, multi-level, Solution computers. The rental fee is \$7.50 a day; rent for five days and get your sixth day free. Reef Divers and Brac Reef Beach Resort offer a wide assortment of scuba packages, including all-inclusive arrangements accommodating almost everyone's taste and budget.

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SUNSET BEACH RESORT

(Continued from Page 85)

is currently a major renovation underway. At present, 24 of the rooms closest to the beach and dive shop have been completely gutted and redone, the other 124 are expected to be finished in the near future. David Hickey, the Sunset Beach Hotel's operations manager, pointed out all the special features of the remodeled rooms, from the ceramic tile floors and new bathroom fixtures to the new air-conditioning unit, 27 inch TV, rattan furniture, vertical blinds, huge walk-in closet and mini refrigerator.



The 38 foot Sea Explorer returns to the Sunset Beach Hotel dock after an afternoon dive trip to Klein Bonaire.

Hugo has many more improvements and additions planned for the future. By the time you read this, what was a casino many years in the past will have been transformed into a conference room that will hold up to 200 people, allowing the Sunset Beach to host mini-seminars and conferences. You'll have to wait for a future article to read about the rest of Hugo's plans, we wouldn't want to spoil his surprises!

Did I mention that your tropical vacation at the Sunset Beach Hotel can be had for an amazingly low price? The 1996 Bonanza package includes roundtrip airfare from Miami to Bonaire, breakfast buffet daily (except morning of departure), six days of one tank dives, one night boat dive, unlimited airfills for shore diving, tanks, weights and weight-belt, U.S. departure tax, U.S. federal taxes, hotel transfers, welcome cocktail, a map of Bonaire and a Bonaire poster. This package is worth a bundle but it's being offered for just \$869 per person, double occupancy, with Wednesday to Wednesday stays.

The Bonanza package is good at the Sunset Beach Hotel. While many people want the services and amenities of a large hotel such as the Sunset Beach, there are groups, families and couples who prefer smaller, more intimate accommodations. Sunset Properties offers a variety of villas and apartments in and around Kralendijk, including the Dive Inn, which has its own dive operation.

Choose the one that best meets your needs; you'll still be diving with the Sunset Beach Dive Center or Dive Inn.

THE DIVING

All of the waters surrounding Bonaire, from the shore to 200 feet, are a marine park and have been for 25 years. Everyone who dives here pays a \$10 fee annually; the money collected is used to maintain the park. Park rules forbid the use of gloves and chemical lights. You'll see ample evidence U/W that your \$10 fee is being used for a worthwhile cause.

My friends and I have sampled a variety of dive sites off the main island and tiny Klein Bonaire and there are many more to see—Bonaire offers more than 80 moored sites. Among them, **Forest**, off Klein Bonaire, is a standout, with Black Corals and great fish life. This is one of Walter Stack's personal favorites, as is **Sharon's Serenity**, also off Klein Bonaire.

We always make a one day safari to Washington-Slagbaai Park, at the north end of the island. **Playa Funchi** is always excellent, from the expected school of Smooth Trunkfish that greets us at the surfline to the unexpected marine life that shows up on the way to or from the drop-off. I photographed a French Angelfish that seemed to know a *Tubastrea* covered backdrop made it especially photogenic. A school of Squid hovered over Antler Corals in the shallows, other divers reported seeing a huge moray free swimming below them on the drop-off.

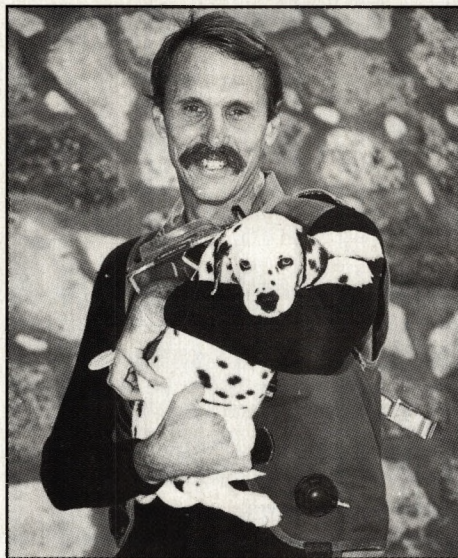
TRAVEL MISCELLANY

I have made six trips to Bonaire; on each one I have seen something new, both topside and underwater. The island is growing—it's even got three fast food restaurants now. There are also miles of mountain biking trails and some of the land sites in Washington-Slagbaai have new markers and paved parking. A trip to this arid Caribbean isle, however, is always a relaxing, refreshing experience. I love the warm water (it averages 79°F year-round), the warm weather and the total lack of stress.

If you live in the U.S., you can fly directly to Bonaire from Miami or Atlanta on ALM. Air Aruba offers flights from Miami or Newark that stop first in Aruba. U.S. and Canadian citizens need only proof of citizenship and a photo I.D., as well as a continuing on ticket to enter the country.

If you've never been to Bonaire, it's time you visited this little island, 50 miles off the Venezuela coast. For more information on the Sunset Beach Hotel, contact Caradonna Caribbean Tours at (800) 328-2288 or (407) 774-9000, fax (407) 682-6000. You can also write to P.O. Box 3299, Longwood, FL 32779.

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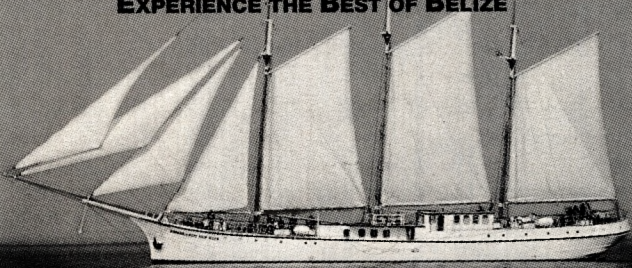
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SEA FEVER CRUISES

(Continued from Page 37)

schools of grunts and snappers dominate this site during the day; the nocturnal denizens of this scattered shallow shipwreck include a pair of massive Loggerhead Turtles (we dived the site three nights and each night the Loggerheads were in the same place), Southern Stingrays and octopus. The diving alone would justify a live-aboard expedition to this part of The Bahamas but, when combined with the nearly guaranteed opportunity to swim with Spotted Dolphins, this trip should be on every diver's wish list for summer travel.

The *Sea Fever* offers at least six distinct itineraries chosen for specific reef and marine life attractions and scheduled for the optimal time of year. In addition to the Northern Bahamas, the *Sea Fever* visits:



The crew of the Sea Fever, including Captain Tom Guarino, third from right.

CAY SAL BANK: This trip originates in Miami Beach, home port for the *Sea Fever*. It cruises three and a half hours to clear customs at Cat Cay and then heads south to dive some of the best walls in The Bahamas, plus seven unique oceanic blue holes. Highlights include **Snapper Reef**, a 50 foot reef home to perhaps thousands of Schoolmaster Snappers and grunts; **Last Rock Wall**, famed for its wildly decorated chimneys and tunnels; and **Shark Hole**, home to dozens of Sharpnose Sharks.

WESTERN BAHAMAS: This also begins in Miami Beach but cruises a range from Bimini to Orange Cay. Favorite dives here include the wrecks of the **Bimini Trader** and **Bimini Barge**, both of which host prodigious schools of fish in only 85 to 90 feet of water; **Shark Reef** with its dozen or so Caribbean Reef Sharks, Nurse Sharks and friendly groupers; the coral canyons of **Tuna Alley** and **Victory Reef**; and another productive Spotted Dolphin encounter at **Eldorado Shoal**.

BERRY ISLANDS/NORTH ANDROS: From Miami beach, this tour visits the 130 foot freighter **Lady Moore**; the massive Elkhorn Coral forests of the **Jolter Cays** and **Holmes Reef**; and the abundant reef tropicals of **Chub Cay**.

EXUMAS: This trip departs Nassau and visits picturesque **Little San Salvador**; the Black Coral festooned **Dog Rock**

Wall; the amazing drift dive at **Wax Cut;** and one of my favorite Bahamas shark dives, **Dangerous Reef** in the Exuma Land and Sea Park.

SOUTHERN BAHAMAS: While all of the above are seven day trips, the *Sea Fever* also offers 10 to 14 day excursions to the seldom dived areas of the Southern Bahamas, including **Cat Island** and the **Tartar Bank, Conception Island, Rum Cay, San Salvador, Crooked Island** and the **Plana Cays**. While some of the areas are tried and true favorites, there is ample exploration on this expedition and reasonable assurance that some sites have never before been dived.

The *Sea Fever* is a 90 foot aluminum live-aboard that began life as a crew boat in the oilfields but has been under nearly constant renovation and improvement since Captain Guarino bought her in 1983. She is powered by three 12 cylinder diesel engines and can cruise at 17 knots. She is set up for 14 passengers in 7 staterooms, is fully air-conditioned and offers amenities such as an E-6 dark-room; underwater video with 8mm and VHS decks for editing and playback; reverse osmosis watermaker; full marine electronics; and a complete galley (good food in abundance is a *Sea Fever* specialty). The oversized dive deck offers tank racks, dive platform with extended ladders, camera table and freshwater rinse. For nitrox aficionados, or those who wish to learn, the *Sea Fever* is the first live-aboard to offer the UBS nitrox membrane system to extract nitrogen from the air, thereby enhancing the percentage of oxygen necessary in enriched air mixes. This system eliminates the fire hazard that pure oxygen might present and does not require dive gear to be oxygen clean. PADI and IANTD nitrox certifications are available during *Sea Fever* charters.

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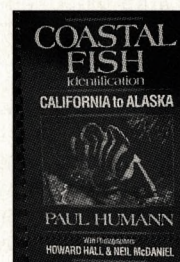
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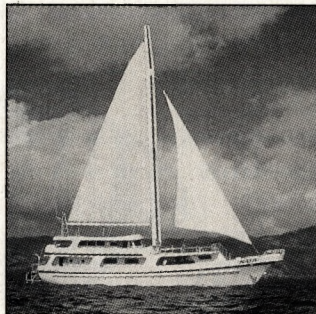


The 220 page book follows the same popular format as Humann's other identification books in the series, which began in 1989 with the award winning *Reef Fish Identification—Florida, Caribbean, Bahamas*. The six by nine inch book is practically indestructible, with laminated plastic covers and a plastic comb binding. The user-friendly format includes a quick-reference family index on the inside covers and a two part main index divided into common and scientific names. Nine color coded identification group chapters organize the fish, eels, sharks and rays into families that share similar physical or behavioral characteristics. The fish portraits are supported by a wealth of information, including the species, common, scientific and family names, size, depth range, distinctive features, description, abundance and distribution, habitat and behavior and reaction to divers.

Coastal Fish Identification—California to Alaska is an important resource for fishwatching divers and snorkelers. The book is available for \$32.95 at scuba retailers and book stores. You can also contact New World Publications, Inc., 1861 Cornell Road, Jacksonville, Florida 32207; (800) 737-6558, fax (904) 731-1188. 🐟

Nai'a CRUISES DRAW PROFESSIONALS:

Stan Waterman, Paul Humann, Marty Snyderman, Dee Scarr, Jack Drafahl, Stephen Frink and other knowledgeable professional photographers have expressed tremendous enthusiasm for the variety of color and fast action of *Nai'a's* new dive sites.



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A recent cruise had 15 Mantas at one dive site, a scorching shark feed and some extraordinarily dense reefs of soft corals. This is the premier Fiji cruise for anyone avid about photography and marine life.

For further details, contact See & Sea Travel, Inc., 50 Francisco Street #205, San Francisco, CA 94133; (415) 434-3400, fax (415) 434-3409. Send e-mail to divxpri@ix.netcom.com or visit the Web Site at <http://www.divxpri.com/see&sea>

RED SAIL SPORTS TO MANAGE SONESTA CURACAO'S DIVING/WATERSPORTS OPERATIONS: Red Sail Sports has assumed management of the watersports operations of Sonesta Beach Resort and Casino Curacao. Red Sail Sports operates watersports centers on Grand Cayman, Aruba, Hawaii and The Bahamas. Sonesta's Red Sail Sports opera-



tion will feature a new Pro 42 dive boat, *Explorador*, which will operate exclusively for guests at the resort.

Sonesta Beach Resort and Casino Curacao has a new Diving In Paradise Package, effective through December 22, based on double occupancy for a four

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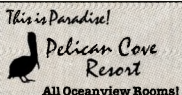
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Dive Notes

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ternational airport.

For more information about the
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766-3782—or your travel agent. 🐠

NEKTON PILOT HOSTS DAN PROJECTS:

Nekton Diving Cruises is sponsoring a
Divers Alert Network (DAN) Project Dive
Safety seminar from November 9
through 16, 1996. The event will take
place aboard the *Nekton Pilot* while
cruising the Southern Bahamas, includ-
ing Great Exuma, Rum Cay, Conception
Island and San Salvador.

Project Dive Safety's goal is to collect
one million dive profiles in order to de-
velop a statistically significant working
database of recreational dives. DAN is
asking divers of all ages, shapes and
sizes to join Project Dive Safety by do-
nating their dive profiles. DAN is recruit-
ing and training a network of dive boat
operations, dive resorts and live-
aboards to become Field Data Col-
lection Sites. All participants will be pro-
vided with free use of downloadable
dive computers in order to collect dive
profiles throughout the week. Along with
computer recorded data, divers will be
interviewed by *Nekton* crew members
trained as Field Data Coordinators.

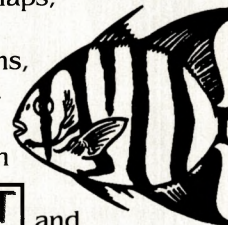
In addition, DAN will conduct Doppler
studies to detect the presence of micro-
bubbles that may occur after exposure to
depth or altitude. The combination of the
Doppler tests, dive logging and surface
observation will enable participants to
learn more about the effects of diving on
their personal physiology.

For further information on this cruise or
on how you or your dive facility can par-
ticipate in Project Dive Safety, contact
DAN Research at (919) 684-2948 ext.
260 or Nekton Diving Cruises at 520 SE
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development of official state level Coral Reef Initiatives and creation of interagency senior level coordinating committees for those initiatives.

Under the U.S. Coral Reef Initiative and the parallel International Coral Reef Initiative, state level governments would develop and pursue three pronged comprehensive coral reef conservation programs focusing on resource management capacity and public awareness building; research and monitoring of coral reef conditions; and coastal management policy implementation focused on reducing or eliminating the impact of landbased development on coral reefs.

ReefKeeper International is conducting a grassroots campaign aimed at obtaining endorsements from 100 groups and organizations.

Another grassroots campaign, to show support for the adoption of no dredging buffer zones in the vicinity of coral habitats, has been launched by ReefKeeper International. This campaign is seeking group resolutions as well as petition signatures to bolster formal rule-making requests submitted by ReefKeeper International to responsible agencies in Florida, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

A free Coral Reef Initiative Action Kit is available by phoning (305) 358-4600, faxing (305) 358-3030, e-mailing reefintl@aol.com or writing ReefKeeper International at 2809 Bird Avenue, Suite 162, Miami, FL 33133. 🐠

DIVE PACKAGES ON ST. CROIX, UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS: This fall, St. Croix's finest hotels are offering affordable dive packages:

The Buccaneer, a luxury seaside resort, offers PADI Five Star dive facilities and departures for 33 dive sites from its beachside dock. Now through December 19, 1996, the eight day/seven night dive package can include either six or ten dives. The package also offers deluxe oceanfront accommodations, two dives daily and all equipment. For more information, call (800) 255-3881.

Divers and nondivers at Hibiscus Beach Hotel can explore St. Croix with its "Virg-In-Clusive" program. Now through December 20, 1996, the eight and five day packages are being offered at special rates. Virg-In-Clusive includes a beachfront room, rental car, all meals and drinks at the resort, including a weekly cocktail party, admission to historic Whim Plantation, a daily choice of diving, golf, horseback riding, parasailing or snorkeling cruise to Buck Island, airport transfers and more. For more information, call (800) 619-0014.

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The resort's eight day dive package features three, two tank beach dives, a night dive, spacious accommodations, taxes and service charges. Special rates are now available through December 17, 1996. For information, call Westin Hotels and Resorts at (800) 228-3000.

STEPHEN FRINK PHOTOGRAPHIC'S CIBACHROME PRINT FACILITIES: Stephen Frink Photographic of Key Largo, Florida, has expanded its facilities for making custom enlargements with the addition of a new Ilford Omnipro processor. While Frink Photo has been making Cibachrome prints for years, the addition of the Omnipro roller transport machine allows for the production of dry-to-dry prints in just four and a half minutes, cutting normal in-lab turnaround time to just two days. Print sizes are from 8 by 10 through 20 by 30 inches.

Underwater photographers who wish to submit slides for custom prints are invited to send them to Stephen Frink Photographic, P.O. Box 2720, Mile Marker 102.5, Key Largo, FL 33037 or phone (305) 451-3737.

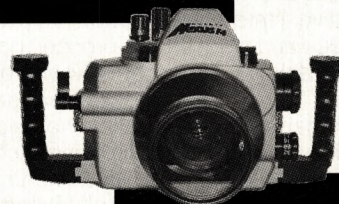
The addition of the Omnipro processor has also facilitated the ability of Frink Photo to sell decorator prints from Stephen's extensive file of premium stock photography. For information about owning photographic art by Stephen Frink, call the WaterHouse Stock Photography at (800) 451-3737 or fax (305) 451-5147.

SONESTA BERMUDA SCUBA PACKAGE: Sonesta Beach Resort Bermuda offers its 1996 Scuba Package and a variety of watersports, excursions and services provided by the on-site South Side Scuba Center. The Scuba Package is available through November 15, 1996. It includes accommodations for a five day/four night stay, European plan; three, two tank dives (excludes equipment); South Side Scuba T-shirts or three hose protectors; and admission to the resort's European spa.

South Side Scuba offers a full service dive program, including instruction and certification, equipment rental and daily dive schedule (including twice weekly night dives), parasailing, ocean rafting, snorkeling and watertoy rentals.

The 400 room Sonesta Beach Resort Bermuda is in Southampton Parish on a 25 acre landscaped peninsula eight miles from Bermuda's capital city of Hamilton and 16 miles from the airport. For information about the resort call (800) SONESTA; (800) 766-3782.

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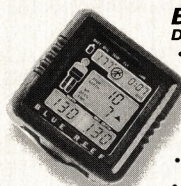
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TREASURE ISLAND DIVERS

(Continued from Page 90)

reef but as you descend the distinctive orange of many large Elephant Ear Sponges becomes apparent, making **Orange Canyon** one of the most colorful sites in the Caribbean. Bushy, black Deep Water Seafans surround many of the Elephant Ear Sponges like lacy halos. Nassau Groupers pose in front of the sponges, each carefully distant from the next so they stay clear of each other's territories. The combination of clear water, sheer wall and plentiful sea life makes it imperative to stick to your dive plan here.

Devil's Grotto is one of many fascinating shallow dives off Grand Cayman. Large mounds of Star Coral have fused over time, creating a maze of long swim-throughs and caverns. Each new turn reveals more life, including Yellowtail Goatfish, Tarpon, Queen Angelfish and Giant Caribbean Anemones. Instructor Laura Engel's tip for divers at this site is to use mostly ankle motion when kicking in the swim-throughs. The controlled motion of this type of kick will help you avoid stirring up the sand, which both your dive buddy and the coral will appreciate.

Fifty to 100 Tarpon loiter in loose schools at **Tarpon Alley** on the North Wall. Their large scales are so mirror-like that they appear to be clad in chrome when the light strikes them at the right angle. If you approach patiently and with a minimum of movement, they will allow you right in their midst. Good buoyancy control is important so you can minimize your fin movements.

Hammerhead Hole, which was named tongue-in-cheek, is a North Wall shallow dive featuring tall coral ridges separated by long sand channels. Dive profiles are normally between 30 and 60 feet, where the huge variety of fish are concentrated. Everything from tiny Sharpnosed Puffers and Harlequin Bass to big groupers and Barracuda can be seen here.

SLEEP INN

Many Treasure Island Divers regulars have switched to the Sleep Inn for its comfort, convenience and reasonable rates. In addition to being near Treasure Island Divers at the beginning of Seven Mile Beach, Sleep Inn is within easy walking distance of several excellent restaurants and a large, modern grocery store. The poolside bar, restaurant and spa are favorite hangouts after dives. The spacious rooms are fully air-conditioned, with large bathrooms and remote control satellite televisions.

Treasure Island Divers on-site dive shop and boutique at the Sleep Inn is called, naturally, the Dive Inn. In addition

to booking trips with Treasure Island Divers here, you can also purchase dive gear, T-shirts and gifts. The courtesy van makes pick-ups for Treasure Island Divers adjacent to the Dive Inn every morning and afternoon. This is a convenience for anyone carrying cameras or other equipment, however, many people opt to walk since Treasure Island Divers is only a short distance from the Sleep Inn.

TRAVEL INFORMATION

Grand Cayman is one of the most easily accessible Caribbean dive destinations. Cayman Airways, the modern na-



tional airline of the islands, flies nonstop from Miami three times a day. Nonstop flights are also scheduled from Atlanta, Houston, Tampa and Orlando. A passport is always a good idea when traveling abroad but U.S. citizens only need a certified birth certificate or voter's registration card, plus a photo ID, for entry into the Cayman Islands.

Cayman dollars are the official currency, usually trading at \$.80 U.S. to \$1 Cayman. Most businesses will accept U.S. dollars but will use a \$.75 to \$1 exchange rate and give you change in Cayman dollars. The electrical current is 110 volt/60 cycle, so no adapters are needed to charge strobe and dive light batteries.

Grand Cayman is principally a dive destination but there are many other activities and sights as well. The Cayman Turtle Farm and the Cayman Maritime and Treasure Museum are worthwhile visits and, of course, there is Hell, a blackened rock formation that shows what the front porch might be like if hell has one. Grand Cayman also has a large selection of restaurants and many fine jewelry and gift shops.

For more information on diving with Treasure Island Divers from the U.S. or Canada, call (800) 872-7552 or fax (954) 351-9740. Reservations and information can also be obtained via the Internet at <http://www.res4dive@netrunner.net>.

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A Glossary of Video Terms

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY JIM CHURCH

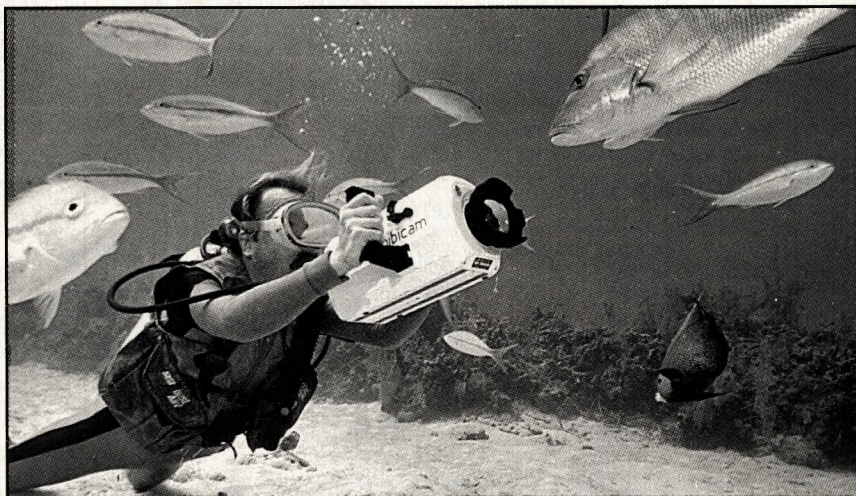
Because underwater videography is evolving and growing into a new frontier for scuba divers, this lesson presents an updated glossary for divers entering this exciting aspect of scuba diving.

ANALOG VIDEO: The video signal is recorded on tape as a series of fluctuating voltages. Because the changes in voltage can be difficult for playback heads to reproduce precisely, generation loss occurs when tapes are copied.

ANGLE OF VIEW: The angle the camera lens sees. It is not specified as vertical or horizontal, the angle of view is measured diagonally from corner to corner.

APERTURE: The iris opening that admits light to the electronic sensing device (see f/stop).

ASSEMBLY EDITING: To select and arrange the order of video scenes while editing.



Underwater videography is one of the new frontiers of scuba diving. An updated glossary, with new terms and buzzwords, may be beneficial to a new generation of videographers.

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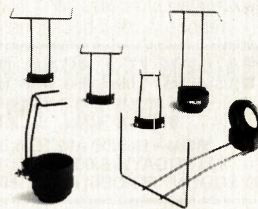
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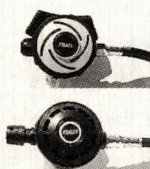
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VIDEO COURSE

AUDIO DUBBING: To add an audio track to a videotape without disturbing the video track.

AUDIO IN/OUT: The port on a camcorder or VCR that inputs or outputs audio.

AUDIO TRACK: The portion of a videotape used to record audio, music and/or narration.

AUTOFOCUS: A built-in system that automatically selects the correct focus (distance). TTL (through the lens) autofocus systems work better for U/W videography than sonic or infrared systems.

AUTOLOCK: A camcorder control that locks camcorder features, such as white balance focus, in the automatic mode.

CAM: A slang term for camcorder.

CAMCORDER: A video camera with a built-in VCR usually called a VTR.

CAMERA: A general term denoting a camcorder or video camera, with or without an U/W housing.

CCD: Charged-coupled device. The component that senses the images and converts them to electrical signals.

CHARACTER GENERATOR: An accessory (built into some camcorders and editing controllers) that electronically generates letters and numbers recorded on videotape.

CHROMA (CHROMINANCE): The color portion of a video signal.

COMPOSITE VIDEO: Signals for chroma (color) and luminance (brightness) are combined in one signal. VHS and standard 8mm use composite video. (S-VHS and Hi-8 camcorders can also record and playback composite video.)

CONTINUITY: (1) The flow of action in a video. (2) Maintaining sameness in dress and screen direction.

CONTRAST: The difference between the brightest and darkest areas in a scene, picture or video image.

CONTROL TRACK: An electronic signal recorded on videotape. It tells the VCR how fast to play the tape.

CONVERSION LENS: A supplementary lens that is placed in front of the camcorder lens. Some conversion lenses increase the angle of view (wide angle) others decrease the angle of view (telephoto). Some are reversible for either a wide angle or telephoto effect.

CU (CLOSE-UP): A close shot that pinpoints a small picture area.

CUT: An instantaneous change from one image (or sound) to another. Cutting is a commonly used editing technique.

CUT-IN SHOT: A brief CU or ECU (extreme close-up) that cuts into the main action. For example, if an MS (medium shot) shows a diver reading a depth gauge, a brief cut-in CU can show the diver's view of the gauge.

DELETE EDITING: To edit by deleting unwanted scenes.

DEPTH OF FIELD: The area in front of the camera—from a minimum distance to a maximum distance—in which your subjects will be acceptably focused.

DEW (WARNING OR SWITCH): A warning signal in the viewfinder and/or switch that turns the camcorder off if the tape or electronics are damp with condensation or humidity.

DIGITAL EFFECTS: Special effects, such as freeze frame, mosaic, strobe, etc.

DV (DIGITAL VIDEO): The video signal is recorded on tape as a series of digits (ones and zeros). Because there are only two values to read during playback, image quality is improved. When dubbing from DV to DV, there is virtually no generation loss.

DISSOLVE: To fade from one image into another (see fade).

DOME PORT: A dome shaped housing port.

DROPOUT: A small, fast spot of light that passes across the TV screen. Dropouts are caused by a bit of missing oxide on the videotape.

DUB (DUBBING): A copy of a video or audiotape (noun); the act of copying a video or audiotape (verb).

ECU: Extreme close-up shot.

ED-BETA (EXTENDED DEFINITION BETA): A high quality Sony videotape format.

EDIT: To choose and/or rearrange scenes in a video or audio track (see insert editing and delete editing).

EDIT CONTROLLER: An accessory that controls two VCRs (or a camcorder and a VCR) during editing. Edit controllers remember selected scenes and assembles these scenes during the edit.

EDIT SWITCH: A switch on a camcorder or VCR that bypasses some playback circuits during dubbing. This produces cleaner dubs.

ELECTRONIC VIEWFINDER: A viewfinder that shows the subject's image on a miniature TV screen. B/W = black and white; Color = LCD color viewfinder.

ESTABLISHING SHOT: A shot, usually an LS (long shot), that introduces the viewer to a scene or action.

FADE: To dissolve from black or white to an image or from an image to black or white. Many camcorders have a fade control. Some editing equipment will allow you to fade to and from colored backgrounds.

FILTERS: Colored optical glass or gel. Their purpose is to alter the color of light passing through the filter. Glass filters are in metal mounts that screw into the accessory threads of the camcorder lens.

FLAT PORT: A flat glass or plastic window in a video housing.

FLYING ERASE HEADS: Special heads that allow you to start, pause and start a camera or VCR without causing unwanted

ed flashes of color and other video noise.

FOCAL LENGTH: The distance from the optical center of the lens to the image sensing device. For practical purposes, focal lengths give an indication of angle of view.

Focus: The adjustment for camera to subject distance. A picture taken with proper focus will appear sharp on a TV screen.

FRAME (PICTURE AREA): The area with the angle of view or within the picture area. Example: The fish swam into frame (into the picture area).

F/STOP (F/NUMBER): A number, such as f/4, that indicates the width of the aperture. The f/stop number is determined by how many times the width of the aperture divides into the focal length.

FULL RANGE AUTOFOCUS LENS: A camcorder lens that can be focused from less than an inch to infinity, while in the autofocus mode, without a special macro adjustment.

GAIN CONTROL: An electronic control that increases or decreases the video signal (to prevent under or overexposure).

GENERATION: A term used to indicate how many times a video or audiotape has been copied. The original videotape is first generation. The first copy is second generation; the second copy is third generation, etc.

GLITCH: Static or other video noise that

appears on the TV screen.

HEADROOM: The space between the top of the subject and the top of the picture area. When shooting divers, for example, avoid having the tops of their heads bump against the top of the picture.

HI-8 (HI-8, HIGH-BAND 8MM OR HI-BAND 8MM): An enhanced version of standard 8mm with higher resolution than standard 8mm.

HQ: High-quality circuitry. Advertising claims and varying standards have made this meaningless.

IMAGE STABILIZATION: An electronic or optical system that reduces the effect of minor camera shaking.

IN-CAMERA EDITING: Shooting scenes in the order in which they will be played back.

INSERT EDITING: Adding a new shot that is placed over one or more existing shots.

IRIS: The metal blades that form the opening that admits light through the lens.

IRIS OVERRIDE: A manual control that can increase or decrease the iris opening selected by the automatic exposure control.

LENS SPEED: The ability of a lens to admit light. A fast lens has a wider aperture and gathers more light in dim conditions.

LINES OF RESOLUTION: See resolution.

LS (LONG SHOT): A long distance shot, usually wide angle, showing an overall view

of the scene. The LS is often used as an establishing, transition or resolving shot.

LUMINANCE: The black and white portion of a video picture. It is the Y half of a YC (S-video) input or output.

LUX RATING: A measurement of how much light is needed to record an image. The lower the lux rating, the lesser the amount of light required.

MAP SHOT: A downward, wide angle view that shows the relative positions of subjects.

MASTER VCR: See Playback VCR.

MACRO: Extreme close-up.

MACRO MODE: A setting on older camcorders, usually activated by pressing a button on the lens, to focus from less than an inch to about four feet from the lens.

MIKE INPUT: An input for attaching an external microphone to a camcorder or other recording or editing device.

MIXER: An editing accessory that mixes (combines) several audio or video inputs and blends them into one or more outputs.

MONOCHROME: Black and white images.

MONITOR (MONITOR/RECEIVER OR TV/MONITOR): A television set with special inputs and outputs for playback directly from a camcorder or VCR, in addition to the normal cable input. (Hi-8 or S-VHS tapes can be viewed on a TV set without S-video inputs if the composite input is used. You won't, however, see

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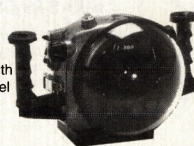
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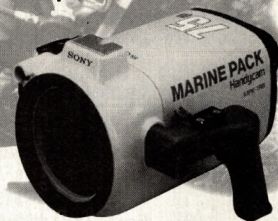
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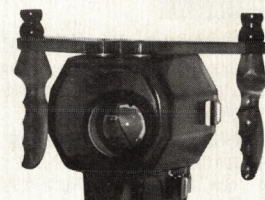


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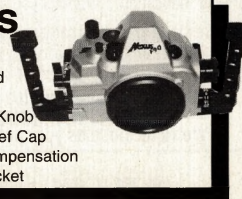
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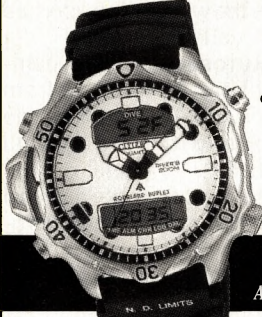
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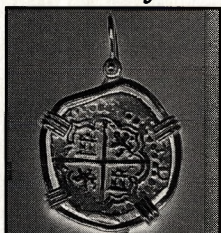
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the full advantages of S-video resolution.)

MS (MEDIUM-DISTANCE SHOT): A medium distance shot that provides the transition between an LS that established a scene and the CU that will follow to pinpoint the action.

NICKEL-CADMIUM: A rechargeable battery commonly used to power camcorders and video lights. These batteries usually last for 500 or more charge and use cycles.

NOISE (VIDEO NOISE): A brief or continuous interference or interruption of picture or sound.

NORMAL LENS: A lens with an angle of view that approximates that of the human eye.

NOSE ROOM: The space between the front of a moving subject and the side of the video picture area. For example, the nose of a moving fish shouldn't bump the edge of the picture.

OVERLAP (OVERLAPPED ACTION): To reshoot the same action that occurred at the end of the previous shot but from a different angle.

PAN (PANNING): Moving the camera from left to right or right to left.

PARALLAX: The difference between the line of sight of an accessory viewfinder and the video camera lens. These lines of sight should meet at a predetermined or preset distance in front of the camera.

PLANT: To introduce the viewer to a subject that will become important later. For example, a quick cut-away to an object a diver/model is searching for.

PLAYBACK VCR (MAIN, MASTER): The VCR used to play the original tape during editing. Often, this is the camcorder's built-in VTR.

POSTPRODUCTION: Video or audio editing after the original tape is shot.

RECORD (RECORDING): To place video images (by shooting or dubbing) on videotape; to place audio (with a microphone or other audio source) on video or audiotape.

REFRACTION: The bending of light rays as they pass through the water/glass/air interfaces of a flat lens port. The effect is to reduce the U/W angle of view to two-thirds the angle of view in air.

RESOLUTION (LINES OF RESOLUTION): Image sharpness as measured in the number of horizontal lines visible in a given picture area. The higher the number of lines, the finer the details recorded or seen.

RESOLVING SHOT: A shot that shows or implies the end of an action or series of related shots. The resolving shot may also provide the transition to the next action.

SCENE: (1) The overall view of a subject or subjects, from the camera's viewpoint. (2) A shot or series of related shots recorded on videotape.

SCREEN DIRECTION: The direction action flows across the TV screen.

SEQUENCE: A series of related shots in

a logical order. A video movie is made of a series of related sequences.

SHOOT (SHOOTING): The act of recording a scene with a camcorder or video camera. Shoot as a verb: a session during which several shots are made.

SHOT: (1) The time from when you turn the camera on until you turn it off. (2) A single view of a scene recorded on videotape.

SILHOUETTES: Dark shapes and figures against light backgrounds.

STANDARD 8MM (8MM): The first 8mm format introduced.

STANDARD LENS: A camcorder lens that focuses from approximately four feet to

infinity. Most standard lenses have a macro setting for close-up focusing.

STORYBOARD: An illustrated plan, in a notebook or on index cards, with sketches and notes for a video production.

S-VHS: An enhanced version of VHS.

S-VHS-C (SUPER VHS COMPACT): The S-VHS format packaged in smaller cassettes for use with S-VHS-C camcorders.

S-VIDEO: Enhanced versions of regular formats. Resolution is increased from less than 300 lines to 400 or more.

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SPECIAL EFFECTS: Catch-all phrase for fades, dissolves, slow motion, freeze-frame and other unusual effects.

TAKE: To attempt to videotape a shot. "Take one" would be the first attempt; "take two," the second attempt.

TAPING (VIDEOTAPING, SHOOTING): See shoot.

TELEPHOTO LENS (TELEPHOTO): (1) A lens that gives a close-up view of distant subjects. (2) The longest zoom setting on a camcorder lens.

TILT: Changing camera angle, either up or down, as you shoot.

TIME-BASE CORRECTOR: A device that corrects timing variations in a video signal. Time-base correction reduces picture jitter and dropouts.

TITLE (TITLES): Words or numbers appearing in a video movie. Titles can be shot from printed title cards or paper, or can be generated with character generators.

TRANSITION SHOT: A shot that leads the viewer from one location, scene or action to another.

VHS (HOME VIDEO SYSTEM): The standard one-inch videotape format used in most home VCRs.

VHS-C (VHS COMPACT): The standard VHS format but packaged in smaller cassettes for use with VHS-C camcorders.

VIDEO CAMERA: A camera without a built-in VCR. These cameras have been replaced with camcorders.

VIDEO CASSETTE: A plastic container that holds videotape. Video cassettes are available in different versions for different tape formats, such as 8mm or VHS and for different tape lengths.

VIDEO CONTROLLER: An accessory that electronically marks the beginnings and endings of video scenes and controls the playback and recording VCRs during editing.

VIDEO PROCESSOR: An editing accessory used for color correction, image enhancement and special effects such as fades, dissolves, character generation and audio mixing.

VIDEO 8: Sony's designation for standard 8mm film.

VIRTUAL IMAGE: An image focused in front of a port by the curvature of the dome. This image will be approximately 12 inches in front of the port, depending on the radius of the port.

VOICEOVER: Narration added to a video by an unseen speaker.

VTR: Videotape recorder, usually built into a camcorder.

WHITE BALANCE: Camera adjustment

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WIDE-ANGLE LENS: A lens with an angle of view wider than the angle of view of the human eye.

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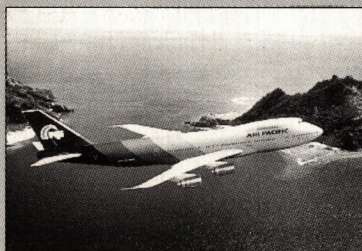
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FIJI FORBES LAUCALA

(Continued from Page 25)

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Lucky Diver Survives Incredible Journey to Brink of Disaster!

BY DIANNE STACKPOOLE

We hadn't been diving very long. I had been certified for six months, my daughter had been certified for two years and my son had been certified for two months. This was to be our first Caribbean dive trip together.

After a few days of two morning dives we were all really feeling great—we were confident, the water was crystal clear and every dive was perfect. We were relaxed and doing well with our bottom time. Our neutral buoyancy was improving to the point we were doing somersaults just for the fun of it!

On our fourth day we were diving the caves and tunnels on the side of a wall, between 90 to 100 feet deep. We had dived this particular spot several times and I remembered the passageways were wide. This time, however, our party of six decided to try a new tunnel. We had to enter it one by one, as it was narrower than the others we'd been in. I followed the divemaster and my daughter (who was my buddy) into the cave. It curved to the left and, while I was admiring the coral, my daughter disappeared from view.

In front of me were two openings, one to the right and one to the left. As I hadn't seen my daughter and the divemaster going to the right, I presumed they had gone through the left opening, which looked small. Being adventurous, I decided if they could do it, so could I. I held my console and octopus close to my body and attempted to pass through the opening. No way! Okay, I thought, they must have gone through the other opening. (They had actually exited overhead!) As I attempted to go through the other opening, I realized I wasn't going to be able to fit through it, either. I felt a little tremor of fear because I could not figure out how the other divers had exited. I decided to back up and look around. As I started to back out of the opening, I realized the top of my tank had passed through the open-

ing and was lodged against the rim. I couldn't move forward or backward and was stuck in the opening of the cave, half in and half out. I couldn't see a soul and it seemed like forever since I had seen the divemaster or my daughter. An incredible feeling of terror overtook me. This is how people die in caves, I thought. This is why everyone tells you not to go into caves! Did anyone know I was stuck? Were they missing me? Okay. Don't panic. That was the main thing emphasized during my training. Never panic! This was the real test and I was going to see how well I did.

I was talking to myself, trying to calm down. I felt like it was a matter of life and death and possibly it was. I checked my gauges. I had 1200 psi of air, which gave me some time to figure out a solution. It finally occurred to me that if I took off my BC, I could probably get through the opening without my gear and then drag it through behind me. As I started to undo my BC, the tank shifted and dropped enough to clear the rim of the opening and I was able to back out.

On my way out I almost knocked over my son and his dive buddy as I rushed toward the exit of the cave. I was very relieved—to say the least—and refused to go in anything resembling a cave or tunnel for the rest of the dive.

When I got back to the boat, I was feeling rather foolish and stupid for having gotten myself into such a situation. The openings did look small but, as they were the only ones I saw, I figured the other two divers had gone through them.

My daughter had noticed right away I wasn't behind her. She could see my bubbles coming from the other side of the cave and had started after me to find out what was wrong. After the feeling of foolishness and stupidity retreated, I began to feel exhilaration at having survived the whole incident and realized an important lesson. I had been down there at 100 feet, stuck like a rabbit in a hole and, although it may have turned a few of my hairs gray, I didn't panic and worked myself free on my own. I felt I had gained invaluable experience and realized how important my training had been. Anyone can put on dive gear and get in the water. What the training does is prepare you for emergencies, which are going to come up sooner or later, no matter how safely you dive. You must know how to handle yourself and not panic—or you may be making your last dive. 🐟

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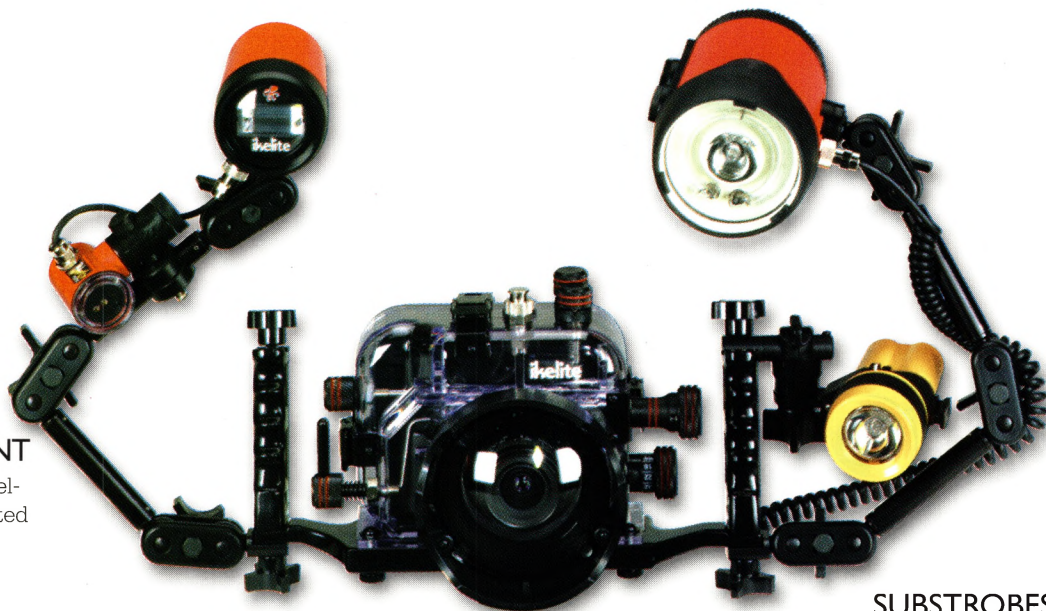
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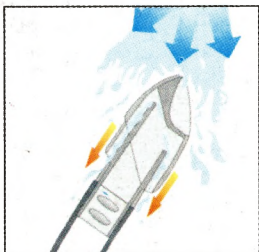
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